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WHAT'S MY IMAGE IN YOUR REPORTS

Rediscussing Objectivity in International News --The
Case of the New York Times and the People's Daily

MASTER THESIS

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SUMMARY

This is a 15-day research study aimed at showing how two newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*, report on issues relating to each other countries i.e. The United States and China respectively. It is conducted in the comparative and analysis manner with the aim of finding out whether the two newspapers reported each other's countries objectively. The quantitative and qualitative methods demonstrate that the problems related to objectivity that are reflected in the two newspapers are also connected to quantity and quality. This is because while reporting about Chinese issues, the *New York Times* had a total percentage of 67 of all its news items having a negative attitude. While reporting on the issues of the United States, the *People's Daily* had more news items with a "superficial" neutral attitude. As a result, in certain aspects, the two elite newspapers violate the principle of objectivity.

The differences between the two newspapers, such as the ownership, their writing style, and economy, culture and foreign policy, are the factors that resulted in the problems of the two newspapers that were reflected in this study. Nevertheless, the international integration has evolved into an unstoppable tendency, expanding from the economic field, slowly into the political and cultural field among different countries around the world. Objective international coverage could be the bridge that could connect countries and promote mutual understanding between them. That will further contribute to the peace and stability of the whole world. And that also consists one of the motivations of this study.

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List of Tables and Charts

Chart 1: Percentage of Selected News Items in the <i>New York Times</i>	28
Chart 2: Percentage of Selected News Items in the <i>People's Daily</i>	28
Chart 3: Allocation of Three Attitudes in the <i>New York Times</i>	29
Chart 4: Allocation of Three Attitudes in the <i>People's Daily</i>	30
Chart 5: Comparison of the Amount of Words between Two Newspapers.....	35
Table 1: The Nature of Topics and Attitude in the <i>New York Times</i>	31
Table 2: The Nature of Topics and Attitude in the <i>People's Daily</i>	33
Table 3: The Genre in the Two Newspapers.....	38
Table4: Tree Attitudes in Genre of Two newspapers.....	39
Table 5: The Foreign Relations in the <i>People's Daily</i>	51
Figure 1: the Own Character of Two Newspapers.....	55

Content

SUMMARY	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
List of Tables and Charts.....	iii
Content.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Research Problems and Research Questions	2
1.2 Background.....	6
1.2.1 American Media	6
1.2.2 New York Times	7
1.2.3 Chinese Media	9
1.2.4 The People’s Daily.....	12
1.2.5 Comparison of the Two Newspapers and the Reasons for Choosing them	13
1.3 Structure.....	14
Chapter 2: Methodology	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Quantitative Method.....	16
2.3 Qualitative Method	19
2.4 The Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	22
2.5 Sampling and Case Study.....	24
Chapter 3: Presentation of the Finding	26
3.1 Introduction.....	26
3.2 Brief Overview of the Two Newspapers.....	27
3.3 Findings through Quantitative Method.....	27
3.3.1 Percentage of Selected News Items and Attitude.....	28
3.3.2 The Nature of Topics and Attitude	31
3.3.3 The Amount of Words and Attitude.....	35
3.3.4 The Genre and Attitude	37
3.4 The Findings through Qualitative Method	41
3.4.1 Group I: Same Theme	41
3.4.2 GroupII: Foreign Relations.....	49
3.4.3 GroupIII: Own Characters	53

3.5	General Conclusion of the Findings.....	55
Chapter 4: Theory.....		58
4.1	Introduction.....	58
4.2	News Values	58
4.2.1	Objectivity.....	61
4.2.2	The Relations between Objectivity and Politics, Economy and Culture.....	62
4.2.3	Bias	65
4.2.4	Ethics	65
4.3	The Stereotype	67
4.3.1	The Characteristics and Outcomes.....	67
4.3.2	Stereotype in Communication.....	69
4.4	Foreign Policy	69
4.4.1	The Relations between Media and Foreign Policy	69
4.4.2	The Relationship between China and US.....	70
4.5	Conclusion	72
Chapter 5: Analysis Chapter		73
5.1	Introduction.....	73
5.2	Why Were the News Items in the NYT Dominated by the Negative Attitude?.....	74
5.2.1	The Intrinsic Factors	74
5.2.2	The Extrinsic Factors.....	76
5.2.3	Stereotype Influence	78
5.3	Why Was the Neutral Attitude Prominent in the <i>People's Daily</i> ?	81
5.3.1	Political Reasons	82
5.3.2	Cultural Reasons	84
5.4	Foreign Policy	87
5.5	Nationality and Cultural Bias	92
5.6	Conclusion	95
Chapter 6: Conclusion		96
6.1	Summary of the Findings and Analysis.....	96
6.2	The Resolution.....	98
6.2.1	The Effort by the Media Outlets.....	99
6.2.2	The Effort by the Journalists and Editors.....	100
6.2.3	The Effort in Writing News Stories	101

6.2.4 Changes and Hopes (Respect and Understanding)	102
REFERENCE	104
Appendix 1	111
Appendix 2	112
Appendix 3	114
Appendix 4	117
Appendix 5	120
Appendix 6	121
Appendix 7	123
Appendix 8	125
Appendix 9	126

Chapter 1: Introduction

Approximately five months before the Beijing Olympic Games last year (2008), a piece of news about Steven Spielberg, an American film director, the owner of four Oscar Golden awards, drew the attention of the world. Mr Spielberg criticized China that despite having been in a long-term partnership with Sudan, it did not contribute hard enough in solving the conflict in the Darfur area. As a result, he decided to resign the role as an artistic advisor of Beijing Olympic Games of 2008. A lot of mainstream media around the world transmitted this news immediately, i.e. ‘Spielberg in Darfur snub to China’ in BBC¹, ‘Spielberg boycotts Beijing Olympics’ in Aljazeera², ‘Spielberg out as China Games adviser’ in CNN³, and ‘Spielberg drops out as adviser to Beijing Olympics in dispute over Darfur conflict’ in the *New York Times*⁴, etc.

Taking into account the negative effect of this incident, the Chinese side actively defended themselves. Shortly after Spielberg’s statement was published, *China Daily*, the state-profile English press of China, continuously released more than 30 pieces of related news items within 30 days. These reports came in different forms and emphasized a diversity of aspects, i.e. ‘China makes ‘unremitting efforts’ to resolve crisis in Darfur’⁵, ‘Netizens baffled by Spielberg decision’⁶, ‘Western media exaggerate China’s limited arms sales to Sudan’⁷, and ‘Spielberg denounced for making misjudgement’⁸, etc. The *People’s Daily*, the state-owned party organ of China, also published a series of reports on its English version website, i.e. ‘China makes efforts to solve crisis’⁹, ‘Spielberg’s resignation not to impact Games’¹⁰, etc. up to 10 pieces during one month. Basing on the response from the Chinese

1 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7242016.stm> (Accessed on 2008-3-6)

2 <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8CA10EF0-F6C7-48ED-B066-74B767B9093C.htm> (Accessed on 2008-3-6)

3 <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/SHOWBIZ/02/12/oly.spielberg.ap/> (Accessed on 2008-3-6)

4 http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/13/world/asia/13china.html?_r=1&oref=slogin (Accessed on 2008-3-6)

5 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-02/16/content_6460400.htm (Accessed on 2008-3-11)

6 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2008-02/19/content_6464450.htm (Accessed on 2008-3-11)

7 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-02/22/content_6477878.htm (Accessed on 2008-3-11)

8 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/olympics/2008-03/05/content_6510164.htm (Accessed on 2008-3-11)

9 http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/olympic/2008-03/05/cotnet_6510164.htm (Accessed on 2008-3-11-20)

10 <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6355641.html> (Accessed on 2008-3-7)

newspapers, the western media, the *New York Times*, for example, published a news article entitled, 'China rejected Darfur criticism'¹¹.

It is not difficult to observe that, based on the above description that once confronted with the same incident, the Western and Chinese media spoke out in different voices and highlighted different aspects of the event. In fact, the event of Spielberg is not an exception. Similar cases are a common occurrence and the consequence of this event just offered another example. Following Spielberg's resignation, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, Jacques Rogge subsequently made a statement. The *People's Daily* of China published an article entitled 'Rogge: sporting, not political association'¹², while on the other hand, BBC's article was entitled 'Rogge respects for Spielberg's move'¹³. By simply observing these two titles, a reader of the *People's Daily* would deem that Rogge disapproved of Spielberg's decision which wrongly mixed sports with politics. On the contrary, the audience of BBC would think that Rogge admired the decision of Mr Spielberg. It is difficult to tell which of the two was being more objective in their reporting.

1.1 Research Problems and Research Questions

The media are regarded as one of the most crucial information channels for the public. Although there is strong competition among diverse media outlets such as television, radio, newspapers, and Internet etc, those media still have their loyal supporters in terms of their own unparalleled characters. The key point however, is the masses still trust the media as a window that presents facts.

Nevertheless, this kind of trust granted by the public is being challenged by those invisible "powers" nowadays. Hackett & Zhao (1998:7) suggested that power may indeed be imposed on journalism from "outside". Direct, indirect, or anticipated pressure from owners, advertisers, or governments can result in stories being spiked or journalists censoring themselves.

Most of the western media outlets are privately-owned. With the influence of globalization and severe competition among media outlets, media companies tend to become larger in the companies' scale and more pluralistic in terms of products and service categories. The owners of those companies become more ambitious in dominating countries and regions worldwide. It is no wonder that nowadays, a number of media conglomerates have been established. These giant media

¹¹<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/world/asia/15beijing.html?scp=5&sq=Steven+Spielberg+&st=nyt> (Accessed on 2008-3-7)

¹² <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90856/6355239.html> (Accessed on 2008-3-7)

¹³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/olympics/7247590.stm> (Accessed on 2008-3-7)

conglomerates, such as Time Warner, Disney/ABC, Viacom (CBS) and News Corporation, own not only news and entertainment information, but also production and distribution companies as well (Hachten, 2005:55). Ben Bagdikian (in Hachten, 2005:55-67) has shown that ownership of most of the major media in the U.S. has been consolidated into fewer and fewer corporate hands – from 50 national and multinational corporations in 1983 to just 20 in 1992. In that 9-year period, the companies controlling most of the national daily circulation shrank from 20 to just 11.

With the issue of the proliferation of media conglomerates raises the question: will the centralization of the power in a few media outlets further impact the quality of reporting? Another question is: what extent will that be: very much, very little, or not at all? For instance, faced with a sensitive event, will the *Australian* in Australia, *The Sun* in the UK and Fox News Channel in U.S.A. convey a similar perspective since they are all branches of News Corporation under the power of Rupert Murdoch? Does the reader from the *Daily Telegraph* of UK, *Chicago Sun Times* of U.S.A., *Jerusalem Post* of Israel, and *National Post* of Canada read the same “picture” of another country reflected in the papers since they are all controlled by the Canadian press baron Conrad Black? Hackett & Zhao (1998:62-66) claim that the shift towards concentrated press ownership can threaten journalistic diversity with a drift to homogenization, which is as much a matter of style as story content or editorial position. Kalb (in Hachten 2005:55) resonates that news has become a big business controlled not by powerful families but by media moguls who place a higher priority on the size of the profits than on the value of their contributions to the society.

The trace of the commercialization of newspapers is not only embodied in the ownership but it has also penetrated into the content of the media. Entertainment i.e. celebrities’ anecdotes are given more priority when it comes to publishing, in that their stories are usually on the front page or other important positions of the newspaper. Hachten (2005:xxi) indicates that these trends toward the trivialization of content and decline of serious news reporting are seen as somehow related to the consolidation of media outlets into bigger and more pervasive media conglomerates with great economic power and influence both here and overseas.

Furthermore, the shadow of political parties looms in the newsroom now and then though the degree of this partisan’s influence differs from country to country. In countries like China, for example, the party is the only owner of all media outlets and it controls from enacting laws, appointing the major personnel to interfering with the content. In other similar countries like Indonesia, Iran, Cuba and Algeria, the press is controlled by the authoritarian states as well (Hachten, 2005:17). In those countries, the function of the media is to serve the Party. In other countries which are characterized by privately-owned media, the invisible hand that influences the media

is not novel as well. Paul Desmarais, owner of dozens of newspapers and broadcasting stations as well as large financial companies, illustrates the close connections between economic, political and media power in Canada. He is the father-in-law of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's daughter, former employer of finance minister Paul Martin Jr., and current employer of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:172). The late French social theorist Michel Foucault argues that power is imbricate with knowledge, not by directly imposing censorship or coercion from outside, but indirectly and internally, through the criteria and practices that "govern" (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:6).

The currency of the centralization in the ownership, commercialization in the content and influence from the partisan bring out a new format for the media industry nowadays while at the same time, it causes a journalism crisis. The most crises are that of the public. Opinion polls show declining public confidence in the news media. Nancy Hicks Maynard, one of the foremost newspaper industry analysts in the United States, worried that journalism in the new landscape was in danger of losing the power to influence public discussion (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:199). In 1988, 55 percent of Americans surveyed said they had confidence in TV news reports; just five years later, that number had plunged to 25 percent (Hackett & Zhao, 1998:162). Journalism's public image is less negative in Canada. A 1994 poll found that only 17 percent of Canadians ranked newspaper reporters high in honesty (ibid).

In China, the situation appears to be similar. A scholar from Fudan University of China made a survey about media public credibility in China. There were four indexes that were used in the survey to measure the credibility and these involved: justice, bias, accuracy, and credibility. The result demonstrates that public credibility of television, broadcasting and newspaper have all not reached the standard of "good" (Tong 2006:18). One correspondent of the *New York Times* who worked in China in the 1990s wrote in his book that only one thing is true in Chinese press: the date on the paper. Even the weather report does not tell the truth (Li and Liu, 1996:320).

Thus, it is not surprising when the exposure of fake coverage and apologies for incorrect reports also become part of the news. One of the *New York Times*' journalists fabricated his reporting about the Iraqi war in his room instead of on the frontline. AFP, the French news agency apologized to the Chinese official department for its improper reporting.¹⁴ The Japanese foreign minister condemned the Chinese media for publishing an incomplete report of the content of the China-Japan economic dialogue.¹⁵ Such scandals over-shadow the brilliant fame of media outlets,

¹⁴ <http://news.wenxuecity.com/BBSView.php?SubID=news&MsgID=538719> (Accessed on 2008-3-5)

¹⁵ <http://news.wenxuecity.com/messages/200712/news-gb2312-492196.html> (Accessed on 2007-12-9)

which in turn influences the judgment of the public as well. A research shows that American people complain that they cannot know whether the powerful China is America's enemy or friend indeed (Li and Liu, 1996:360).

At this point, one can ask why so much inaccurate information flows out from the media network. During the process of publishing a newspaper or transmitting a news report, there are usually several gatekeepers that act as inspectors. Journalists themselves rank as the first gatekeepers, followed by the editors and then the editor-in-chief. Through those different layers of inspection, every piece of news item can be safely conveyed to the public. However, why is it that inaccurate information continues to spill through? What factors prevent accurate inspection in the process of publication? What factors disturb the circulation of the information? Is it the factors mentioned previously such as the centralization of ownership, the commercialization of the media and the interference of the ruling party that are affecting the news reporting?

Subsequently, will all these factors in turn affect the objectivity of a story, especially the international news? Why should the reporting of one country be easily criticized by another as lacking objectivity? Or could there be others aspects in addition, such as the foreign policy of a nation that could affect objectivity in a story? Does the definition of "objectivity" sway between politics and the economy and therefore reduces the news standard in different countries?

Objectivity as it is usually defined in journalistic textbooks emphasizes the truthfulness of a story, which means that the news story – as far as possible – shall be based on undisputable facts. In practice reliable experts, called information sources, certify these facts. Furthermore the story must be balanced, which means that tone of the text shall be detached and not evaluative or 'biased'. Most often these rules apply for the single story, but balance may also be obtained over the longer run by publishing stories supporting and opposing a contested issue.

Specific to this study, the research question is: how do Chinese newspapers report issues of the United States and how do United States' newspapers report Chinese issues in a given period of time? More importantly, this question further sparks off other questions such as; Is it possible for two newspapers from two different countries to be able to publish reports on each other's countries correctly and objectively? Secondly, what are the reasons behind the manner in which these newspapers report on each other's countries? The two chosen newspapers that were selected as case studies for this study are: the *People's Daily* from China, and the *New York Times* from the United States.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 American Media

Americans are proud of the achievements that they have made in the media industry so far, such as the First Amendment on the freedom of the press and their Code of Ethics, but on the other hand, criticisms about American media's lack of objectivity and the use of double principles in reporting news continue to be heard, both within and outside America. Nevertheless the American media is still held in high esteem amongst the world media and its domestic Pulitzer Award is still considered prestigious internationally.

This can partly be attributed to the criteria of news reporting, which was proposed by Joseph Pulitzer that emphasizes justice, objectivity and social responsibility. Pulitzer claimed that "Every issue of the paper presents an opportunity and responsibility to say something courageous and true; to rise above the mediocre and conventional; to say something that will command the respect of the intelligent, the educated, the independent part of the community; to rise above fear of partisanship and fear of popular prejudice" (Emery, 1992:169). Due to this high standard in the reporting, the winners of Pulitzer Award are often viewed as heroes by many students studying journalism. Furthermore, the writers' techniques in the text are seen as the best samples in the journalism curriculum. Pulitzer, however, was only one of the pioneers in the American journalism field. There are many other outstanding figures bracing the American media industry, such as the American contemporary journalistic historian Edwin Emery and Michael Emory, Wilbur Schramm, Walter Lippmann, and Denis McQuail, etc.

As a traditional medium, the development of the American press was and is still experiencing ups-and-downs. In the 1900 eight groups of dailies controlled 27 papers and 10 percent of the total circulation. By 1990 135 groups controlled 1228 papers and 81 percent of total daily circulation (Emery, 1992:532). Nowadays, faced with competition not only from the broadcasting industry, but also from the Internet media, the circulation and the influence of the press has gone down dramatically. Consequently, in 1950 there were 1,772 daily papers, while in 2000, there were 1,480 daily papers.¹⁶

In comparison with the Chinese media, the main characteristics of the American press include the following:

- 1) The primary source of newspaper income is from advertisements, rather than from

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_of_the_United_States (Accessed on 2008-4-22)

circulation income.¹⁷

- 2) All the newspapers are privately owned. They are not an organ of the party.
- 3) The U.S. does not have a national paper per se, although the influential dailies like *the New York Times* and *the Wall Street Journal* are sold in most U.S. cities.¹⁸
- 4) Further deregulation and convergence of the press are under way, leading to mega-mergers, further concentration of media ownership, and the emergence of multinational media conglomerates.

Throughout the decade of the 1930s, China received very little attention in the U.S. press, even though American journalists in China were not only documenting events of enormous consequence for China's future, but also becoming increasingly involved in them (Rand, 1990:208). This situation did not change much even in the 1960s. During the Cultural Revolution in 1967, there were only four Western correspondents in China (Farmer, 1990:246).

But in the 1970s China became an American media story. American readers saw what was happening in China. China's admission to the UN in 1971 was followed by American President Nixon's week-long visit to China in 1972, and a gradual thaw, President Carter's diplomatic recognition of China at the close of 1978 then opened the door to American news bureaus in Beijing and to an exchange system of students in different faculties. In 1986, there were 29 Americans among 115 foreign correspondents in Beijing (Emery, 1992:454).

1.2.2 The New York Times

The *New York Times* can be seen as a typical representative of American press. It was established more than 150 years ago, but until today, its status and fame has not faded with the passing times. Instead, it has been acknowledged with the title of "newspaper of record"¹⁸ and it is still the pace-setter among the American media industry. Although it has undergone marked changes in the recent years, *The Times* is still considered as the nation's most influential newspaper and targets an elite readership (Hachten, 2005:9). Although the Times' primary audience has always been the people of New York City, its influence is far beyond this city.

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_of_the_United_States (Accessed on 2008-4-22)

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_of_the_United_States (Accessed on 2008-4-22)

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_of_the_United_States (Accessed on 2008-4-22)

The *New York Times* is a daily newspaper published and distributed internationally. It is owned by The New York Times Company, which publishes 15 other newspapers.¹⁹ The *Times* has 16 news bureaus in the New York State region, 11 national news bureaus and 26 foreign news bureaus.²⁰ The *New York Times* has a Sunday circulation of about 1.7 million, of which about 200,000 comes from its national edition (Hachten, 2005:9). One of the *Times*' strong points was the interpreting of foreign news (Emery, 1992:106). The *New York Times* has been argued that it "ends up influencing the content" of other mass media and that it "may not be a bad indicator of the general thrust of news" that reaches the U.S. citizenry (Chang, 1989:186).

The *Times* has won 95 Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other newspaper.²¹ Among them, 3 out of 95 are related to issues of China. The first Pulitzer Prize went to Max Frankel of the *New York Times*, who went to China for the first time with Nixon in 1972 and made a report entitled, "voyage of discovery". Since Frankel, there has not been any great flood of Pulitzers going to reporting China, until Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn were accorded an award in 1990 based on the Tiananmen reportage (Emery, 1992: 455) In 2007, American Joseph Kahn and Jim Yardley from the *New York Times* won Pulitzer Prize in international reporting for their examination of China's legal system.²²

In 1995, the *Times* launched its Internet version. It has been ranked one of the top websites with 555million page views in March 2005.²³

The attention that the *Times* cast on China began quite earlier than it did in other media outlets in the U.S. It was one of the three media houses in the U.S. that sent a correspondent to China and covered the student demonstrations of 1919 in Beijing (Rand, 1990:206). Furthermore, it was the only western media to report Nanjing Massacre, uncovering the violence of the Japanese army in the south of China in the 1940s (Li and Liu, 1996: 305). The correspondents of the *Times* were on the spot and transmitted significant reports about China timely to its domestic audiences, such as the ice breaking moment of the relationship between China and the U.S, the Tiananmen massacre, the China economic reform, etc.

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times (Accessed on 2008-4-21)

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times (Accessed on 2008-4-21)

²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times (Accessed on 2008-4-21)

²² http://www.nytc.com/company/awards/pulitzer_prizes.html (Accessed on 2008-3-5)

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times (Accessed on 2008-4-21)

1.2.3 Chinese Media

The development of China's media is influenced by former USSR's model as well as the Western model. In addition, its growing footprints are tightly related to the domestic political and economic environment as well as relevant policies. With the aid of the former USSR in the military and the political fields, the Chinese media inherited Marxism and Leninism as its theory basis.²⁴ Based on this theory, the Chinese media were previously regarded as tools of class struggle, with their major functions being to indoctrinate, agitate and mobilize.²⁵ It is the instrument of the Communist Party and a vital cog in the machinery of government.²⁶

The history of modern journalism in China was also correlated to Western influence. The first modern newspapers in China were foreign-language papers, and the first Chinese-language newspapers were Chinese editions of foreign papers. Even after the development of autonomous Chinese newspapers, relations to foreign owners were often maintained as protection against censorship (Womack, 1990:236). According to the agreement of cooperation between China and the U.S. in the beginning of the last century, Chinese students were sent to the U.S. to learn about western journalism. Many of those students have contributed a lot to the reformation of Chinese journalism.

Hong & Cuthbert (1991:12) suggest that although China's mass media have already absorbed something from the West, they will not be totally westernized; and although they will still keep something from the Marxist model, they will not be totally unchangeable. Therefore, today's Chinese media are hybrids that partly conform to the Western and USSR models before finally forming their own models. Combined with their own situation, Chinese media later adopted Maoist (Mao Zedong) and the Dengist (Deng Xiaoping) thoughts with the initiatory Marxism and Leninism as its theoretical ground. On 19th April 1950 the CPC (Chinese People Communist) central committee entailed a policy "conducting criticisms and self-criticisms in newspapers" (Chang, 1990:103). It seems that the reform of the Chinese media started with cautious pace.

²⁴ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/42/3/143> Loud thunder, Small Raindrops: The reform Movement and the Press in China p143

²⁵ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/67/3/255> Market or Party Control?: Chinese Media in Transition p13

²⁶ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/42/3/143> Loud thunder, Small Raindrops: The reform Movement and the Press in China p143

Nonetheless, this trial to liberalize Chinese press policies ended in January 1987 with the ousting of Hu Yaobang as the Communist party leader. Hu's death in April 1989 sparked off widespread demonstrations against the right-wing government. Students occupied the Tiananmen Square, seeking democratic reforms. Furthermore, they won the support of the majority of Chinese journalists and extensive press coverage (Emery, 1992:455). The journalists and editors went to the streets and joined the protest, crying out for the liberation of the press and asking for the truth in the news. The proportion of national-level media organizations who took to the streets were particularly impressive: more than half the employees of the *People's Daily*, the official paper of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, -- 1,000 out of the total editorial and non editorial staff of about 1,600-- joined the demonstrations (Polumbaum, 1990: 38).

The profound reform started in 1992 after the previous leader Deng Xiaoping's South of China Inspection tour.²⁷ Since then, most of the Chinese media become self-independent in economic revenue, but were still party politically controlled. The Chinese media reform further deepened after China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001, and new statutes were enacted for press freedom before the 2008 Olympic Games, particularly in regards to the restraints on foreign journalists reporting in China. And those items that were predicted to be banned after the Olympics by some people have actually been left in place by the Chinese authority.²⁸

The media in China has two visible characters;

- 1) Two service objects (or two masters as Winfield & Peng say): the state and the economic support system

Winfield & Peng (2005:8) claim, in many cases, the latter might be more important and urgent for the media managers, but the former still affect the media content

- 2) Semi-commercialization reform

Nevertheless the state-party continuously controls the initiative of the media to a certain degree, resulting into a semi-commercialization form of the Chinese media. This situation is more like a tenant who earns money by himself but never

²⁷ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/67/3/255> Market or Party Control? -- Chinese Media in Transition p5

²⁸ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/18/world/asia/18china.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=China%20Eases%20Rules%20for%20Foreign%20Media&st=cse (Accessed on 2008-10-18)

takes ownership of the house. Nonetheless, the Chinese media system is moving from totalitarianism to market authoritarianism.²⁹

In regards to the scale of the state-party role as well as the degree of openness of commercialization, today's Chinese media can be roughly classified into three major types:³⁰

- 1) Official mainstream media, which refer to the state news organizations directly owned and operated by the government, such as Xinhua News Agency, the *People's Daily*, and CCTV (China Central Television).
- 2) The outer circles, such as papers of the trades and various regional media. These are not considered as official state media because they are not directly controlled by the state government and they deviate from the official line.
- 3) The fringe media, which are the new media organizations founded after the rise of commercialization. These media are subject to the least government political and financial constraint, and are developing into a major alternative voice. Many of the web portals also fall within this category.

Although the state-party has the privilege to manipulate the media in China, the party does not allocate any subsidies to most of the media any more, and so this privilege is being challenged. On the other hand, the independence of the economy urges the media to consider its market orientation and its readers' appetites. Therefore, despite the fact that officially the media's role is still defined as the government's voice, the economic structure means they must accommodate the interests of their advertisers and their audiences.³¹ Today the nature of the media products includes not just traditional propaganda but also journalism which attracts the attention of readers, as well as products to be sold through advertising. Consequently, after the commercialization in its economic revenue, Chinese media play a dual role now: selling commodities in the market and ideological apparatuses of the state-party. Previously unheard voices became part of the public consciousness and lessened the

²⁹ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/67/3/255> Market or Party Control? -- Chinese Media in Transition p5-6

³⁰ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/67/3/255> Market or Party Control? -- Chinese Media in Transition p8

³¹ <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/67/3/255> Market or Party Control? -- Chinese Media in Transition p8

previously all-encompassing nature of Communist ideology in information through types of ownership and financial support.³²

Huang & Yu (1997:324) suggest that with economic liberalization and political suppression going hand in hand, future cycles of tightened media control in China will not be surprising. But, one should not lose sight of the potential of the media changes both as an important counterforce against political continuity and as a promotional catalyst for media democratization.

1.2.4 The People's Daily

The *People's Daily*, or *Rinmin Ribao* in Chinese, is an official, serious, and quality newspaper in China. The *People's Daily* has been known as China's most influential paper since its establishment on 15 June 1948. Its name originates from a slogan that the paper is of the people, by the people, and for the people (Chang, 1989:92). Even though the *People's Daily* boasts of the world's largest readership, its daily circulation has continuously declined in recent decades, from a peak of 7 million copies per day to 2.15 million in 1995 (Ibid). This is partly because since 1978, the outer circle media and the fringe media as introduced previously have mushroomed.

The *People's Daily* has a readership that is broad and varied. According to a 1983 survey, the majority of the readers are workers, government employees, intellectuals, and students while 66.6 percent have a high school education (Chang, 1989:96). The content of the newspaper version of the *People's Daily* include columns like breaking news, follow-ups, commentary, and letters to the editor. It also carries criticism-running articles or letters to the editor, exposing the wrongdoing, errors, or shortcomings of government officials and business executives in the hope of getting them corrected (Chang, 1989:101).

The paper has an official duty to propagate the Party's political line, policies, and tasks among the Chinese people. The newspaper plays the role of a liaison officer between the Party and the people, telling people what the Party expects them to do and reporting their views and wishes to the Party leadership. In other words, the *People's Daily* is the voice of the Party as well as the voice of the people (Chang, 1989:93).

Normally, the editor in chief of The *People's Daily* is nominated and assigned by the Party. The requirement for that post involves one's personal political identity, in that he must be Communist and secondly, he must be of high professional ability. In the

³² <http://gaz.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/67/3/255> Market or Party Control? -- Chinese Media in Transition p8

history of the *People's Daily*, some of the editors-in-chief were strict in requesting the professional ethics of the journalists and they positively pushed for the reform of the paper. Deng Tuo was a director and editor-in-chief in the 1950s and early 1960s. He came up with the motto, "The decisive battle is won out of the editorial room," meaning that the best news stories can be found only in society (Chang, 1989:98). Hu Jiwei, the director and editor-in-chief of the paper in the late 1970s and early 1980s, emphasized that the major task of the *People's Daily* is to report and promote the reform. During the time he was in power, the paper placed great emphasis on the coverage of policy matters. In 1983 the paper even drafted a reform plan (Chang, 1989:99-100). But Hu's reform encountered challenges at that time. Consequently, he proved to be such a bold innovator for some Central Committee members, and thus lost his post in 1983 (Polumbaum, 1990:52). However, the conduction of those reform pioneers reflects a strand of rising strength in the society, directly or indirectly pushing the reform forward.

In the years of 1979 and 1980 when Deng vigorously promoted reforms, the Party consciously expanded press freedom in two or three papers in Beijing, including the *People's Daily*. At that time, the circulation of the *People's Daily* had gone up to seven million. Readers enjoyed the *People's Daily* more than ever. But even in those 2 years, the staff of the *People's Daily* constantly received phone calls of condemnation, asking why this or that article was published and why some statements were printed (Liu, 1990:135). Obviously, the pace of the reform in China is still very slow and its scope is limited as well.

The People's Daily also publishes several small publications and it has its overseas edition, targeted at the Chinese reading public outside China, whose interests and habits are different from those of the mainland. The purpose of this is to transmit the most important policies of the Communist Party and the Chinese government, and to inform readers of what is happening in China (Chang, 1989:93-95). In 1997, the *People's Daily* launched its internet version.

1.2.5 Comparison of the Two Newspapers and the Reasons for Choosing them

From the above discussion, it is easy to observe that both *The New York Times* and *the People's Daily* share some common characteristics.

First of all, in regards to the paper style, both newspapers are serious papers, emphasizing the quality of the content and the nature of the public they serve.

Secondly, both newspapers are the elite press in their respective countries, which assigns to them an influential role in informing leaders and interested members of the citizenry. Therefore, both of the two newspapers have a high prestigious status in their respective countries. In the United States, two newspapers and two magazines

mainly guide the general consensus of the direction of readers, and among those is the *New York Times*. While in China, two newspapers and one magazine acts as the most prominent voice of the Party, and the *People's Daily* is among these, taking the first position (Li and Liu, 1996:265).

Thirdly, the two newspapers are commercialized although the degree of their commercialization and the manner in which they operate is different.

The above similarities in the two newspapers partially account for the reason why they were chosen as case studies for this research. In addition, these similarities provide a possibility to compare two newspapers that come from two countries with completely different political systems.

Furthermore, easy access of data from the websites of the two newspapers made it possible to compare and analyze the two newspapers.

On the other hand, the two newspapers have differences in a number of aspects. The most distinct difference is their ownership: while *the New York Times* is privately owned, *the People's Daily* on the other hand is state owned, which does not exclude that the paper get some of its revenue from advertisements and the publishing of magazines. Due to that distinct difference, the newspapers are further differentiated in other aspects, i.e. their function, the revenue resource, management model, high-profile appointment, orientation of the newspaper, as well as the interior censorship, etc.

Subsequently, a few questions emerge out of these observations. Do the similarities in these two newspapers contribute to the similarities in their manner of reporting? Are the diversities between the newspapers capable of affecting the objectivity of the news reporting by each of these papers? If so, how do they affect news reporting and to what extent? In case these diversities do not affect the nature of news reporting, what other factors affect the nature of news reporting by these two newspapers and how?

1.3 Structure

The whole thesis consists of six chapters, namely; Introduction, Methodology, Theory, Findings, Analysis and Conclusion.

This introduction presents the problems observed in the nature of news reporting by the newspapers; thereby kick starting off the thesis. Based on the problems observed, the main research question has been stated to be specified later. In order to find out the problems and in order to analyze them appropriately, two newspapers from the two nations were chosen as case studies. The reasons for choosing these two

newspapers will be introduced as well as their background and the development of the media in their respective countries.

The methodology chapter will outline three methods that will be employed in this study. These are the qualitative, quantitative techniques and the case study method. The reasons behind their choice, what they entail and how they will be used will be given in detail. The pragmatic application of those methods will be presented in the findings chapter.

The theory chapter will focus on the theoretical frameworks that function as the ideological frameworks for the latter empirical study in the analysis chapter. Since the data collected from the two newspapers is all international news, the foreign policy of a nation and the cultural background also affects news reporting from a certain extent. Therefore, the chapter will contain theories coming from the communication field, such as news values and journalistic ethics; it will also contain theory originating from the psychology area, such as stereotype; and it will also contain theory from social sciences, like the conception of foreign policy. Although those theories or conceptions originate from different areas, they could be very crucial in exploring the problems in this study.

The empirical section will consist of two chapters, i.e. the presentation of the findings and their analysis. The presentation of the findings that will be arrived at following the three methods mentioned above, will be answering the following questions: How do the two newspapers represent their reports on each other's country? What do they prefer to report on? And what problems related to objectivity do they present during reporting? Consequently, the analysis chapter will explain the choice of the theories in the theory chapter and will further analyze and answer the question as to why the two newspapers report in the manner in which they do.

The last chapter will contain the final discussion, summarizing the content of the previous five chapters and it will also offer a personal view and suggestions concerning the resolution of the problems about the objective reports.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a series of methods will be introduced to analyse the news items collected from the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*. These are namely; quantitative methods, qualitative methods, and the sampling or case study method, of which, the first two will be the main methods, and the latter will be applied as an accessorial method, overlapping the qualitative method. This chapter will simply present which methods will be used, how they will be used in an effort to explore the findings, and also the reasons as to why they were chosen will be given. An empirical and detailed explanation and operation will be given later on, in the findings chapter.

The period in which data was collected from the two newspapers was from May 24th to June 7th in 2007. The choice of this period was random, without any intention of including a big event, or any meaningful date for either country. The main purpose for doing this was to avoid an unbalanced situation in the quantity of stories from the two newspapers. Within this time span, 90 stories that were eligible for both quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis were collected. Priest (1996:6) said that accuracy and adequacy of scientific measurement instruments is the central focus of quantitative method. The number 90 seems not sufficient enough for a quantitative research. However, on the other hand, taking into account of that qualitative method is another important method in this study, the number 90 is a reasonable choice because high numbers will bring abundant variables for the qualitative analysis. Hoyle et al. (2002:397) argue “if too many variables are coded, the researcher is in danger of capitalizing on chance in the analyses”.

The reason for combining qualitative and quantitative methods is because these two methods involve differing strengths and weaknesses; they constitute alternative, but not mutually exclusive strategies for the research (Patton, 2002:14). Additionally, the characteristics of the problems presented in the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* need different methods in order for them to be manifested and analyzed. Specifically, the quantitative method is more suitable for problem presentation in the *New York Times*. The qualitative method is better for the *People's Daily* because the problem in this newspaper was relevant to content evaluation. Certainly, the quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to analyse some issues in the two newspapers.

2.2 Quantitative Method

In general, the qualitative method is characterized by numbers. Bryman (2004:19) claims that quantitative research emphasizes quantification in the collection and

analysis of data. This implies that the data will be presented, or will be analyzed in the manner of using numbers as sign and language. This kind of sign and language has certain objectives due to the fact that interpretation using numbers seldom contains emotional factors. Patton (2002:27) stresses that the data simply describes what occurred. It does not include judgments about whether what occurred was good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, or any other interpretive judgments. Bryman (2004: 19,182) echoes that the quantitative method involves a view of social reality as an external. Objective reality that further indicates that objectivity means that there is transparency in the procedure when assigning the raw material to categories so that the analyst's personal biases intrude as little as possible in the process. Therefore, simply put, quantitative methods use numbers (Priest, 1996:6).

In addition, quantitative methods entail a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2004:182). This merit of quantitative method forms a vivid comparison with the qualitative method which entails an inductive approach to the relationships between theory and research. In theory, a measurement device provides a consistent instrument for gauging differences (Bryman, 2004:66). In practice, quantitative research focuses on the measuring instrument – the test items, survey questions, or other measurement tools (Patton, 2002:14). Usually, the measurement will not be limited to one reference index. Rather, in most researches, multiple-item measures are the major approaches, with scales, serving the basic function of providing a usable measure of a theoretical construct. It can reduce the complexity of a measure of a construct (Hoyle et al, 2002:153). Hoyle et al. (2002:154) further claim that the most important advantage of multiple-item measures is improved reliability and validity of measurement.

In the case of this study, the multiple-measures will be particularly used to determine the diverse categories of numbers of news items published by the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* within 15 days. That involves the sum of news items issued by two newspapers over the study period, the number of the news items classified in different genres; the number of the news items classified in different topics; the sum of words presented in the coverage and the allocation of the percentage of the news items in the above categories. Secondly, 90 news items will be used to calculate the number and the percentage of three attitudes (positive, negative and neutral) in terms of different genres, topics and number of the words in the text. Thirdly, they will be used in comparing the number, percentage and the allocation of attitude in the two newspapers, hence drawing a conclusion.

The quantitative part contains content analysis as well. Davies and Mosdell (2006:98) define content analysis in the quantitative extent, as a systematic and objective analysis of any particular text, whether a newspaper article, a book, a television clip

or an advert. Some scholars are concerned more about the text description of the content analysis in the quantitative context. Bryman (2004:183) argues that content analysis is firmly rooted in the quantitative research strategy in that the aim is to produce quantitative accounts of the raw material in terms of the categories specified by the rules. Berelson (1952:18) also claims that content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Davies and Mosdell (2006:98) outline that content analysis is essentially counting things. From a certain extent, content analysis in the quantitative method might be converted to answer the question about why the researcher needs to do that counting.

The content analysis of quantitative method in this study is to use the different groups of numbers to present the characteristics of the two newspapers and further using those numbers to explore the reasons behind the characteristics. In practice, the quantitative method mainly uses calculation and statistics of four categories: the sum of news stories, the topic, the amount of words of the news stories and the genre. Some charts and tables will be made in an effort to clearly present the figure after the calculation.

Some characteristics reflected in the coverage of the two newspapers subsequently emerge along with those figures calculated by quantitative method. For instance, is business news more prevalent than political news in the two newspapers? Or is that a trait belonging to the *New York Times*? Is hard news with few words still dominant in international news section of the two serious newspapers? And does the *New York Times* focus more on Chinese issues than the *People's Daily* does on US? Or could the situation be the reverse? Are most of the stories in the two newspapers dominated by the negative attitude or is this attitude dominant in only one of the newspapers?

Some decades ago, scholars preferred to use either quantitative or qualitative methods in their study. Quantitative researchers who have been influenced by positivist philosophy argue that qualitative research results are of less value because they are too subjective (Priest, 1996:6). Nowadays however, the mixture of the two methods seems more practical and comprehensive and thereby they are actually applied by more and more researchers in their studies. This mixture of the two methods originates from each method's limitation and its disadvantages. Still using content analysis as an example, Bryman (2004:197) suggests that the disadvantages of (quantitative) content analysis are likely to arise when the aim is to impute latent rather than manifest content. It is difficult to ascertain the answers to 'why?' questions through content analysis. He (2004:78-79) further presented four brief criticisms about the quantitative methods: quantitative researchers fail to distinguish people and social institutions from 'the world of nature'; the measurement process

possesses an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy; the reliance on instruments and procedures hinders the connection between research and everyday life; and the analysis of relationship between variables creates a static view of social life that is independent of people's lives.

2.3 Qualitative Method

Though the quantitative and qualitative methods both have an overlapping part in their application due to the fact that they are typically interested in both what people do and what they think, a further investigation into these two methods shows that they do this in different ways (Bryman, 2004:189). The distinctions between those two methods are obvious. First and foremost, when the quantitative method uses numbers as the language to present facts, the qualitative method needs to see through the fact beyond just numbers. Patton (2002:10) indicates that qualitative findings in evaluation illuminate the people behind the numbers and puts faces on the statistics, to deepen understanding. Secondly, qualitative methods focus more on the content analysis which involves the usage of words in a news story, the frame, the context, and the reasons behind those choices, etc.

The qualitative approach is characterized as “a process, which allows for the flexible application of theoretical concepts and analytical procedures to a wide variety of empirical domains” (Jensen, 2002:236). Releasing from the limitation of the number qualitative method focuses on the words, text, and context. The scope and field for the application of the qualitative method are more diverse and broad. How a journalist reports an affair, how a politician comments on a phenomenon, how an economist uses numbers to present a conclusion are all relevant to the qualitative method. Moreover, why this journalist reports like this, why this politician comments from that perspective, and why that economist selects certain numbers also relates to qualitative methods. The question about ‘what’ and then the next ‘why’ can also be connected to the qualitative method. Priest (1996:5) concludes that qualitative methods rely on the interpretation and analysis of what people do and say without making heavy use of measurement or numerical analysis as quantitative methods do.

In this study, the qualitative method serves for the content analysis and comparison. Content analysis analyzes how the journalists frame their stories, from the topic of a story, the title, the lead, the body and the attitude the journalists hold in the story. Comparison is a main means in the qualitative method. There are three categories involved in qualitative methods that offer possibilities for comparison of the two newspapers and these are; the ‘the same theme’ group, ‘foreign relations’ group and the ‘own characters’ group. They are used to compare the different writing behaviours between the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*.

Similarly, the qualitative method bonds multi-disciplines together through applying different theories. For instance, the analysis of news coverage entails political and economic theories. The political phenomenon is relevant with communication theory and the economy concept as well, and on the other hand, the economic mode might borrow conceptions from the communication field and be affected by the political environment. During the procedure of comparison and analysis, the qualitative method combines diverse theories together. Thus, qualitative inquiry is a set of multiple practices in which words in methodological and philosophical vocabularies acquire different meanings in their use or in particular acts of speaking about the meaning of the practice (Schwandt, 1997).

The process of the qualitative method can be simply presented by a formula, namely coding data, finding patterns, labelling themes, and developing categories of systems (Patton, 2002:454).

Coding Data

The term “data” here stresses the content instead of figures, or numbers. It includes the text, context, background, theme as well as categories of a study. From a certain degree, coding data also refers to content analysis. Certainly, coding what kind of content depends on the researchers. Therefore, Smith (2000) claims that content analysis is the process of extracting desired information from a text by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of the text.

Furthermore, reaching a certain degree of content analysis is also related to the researchers’ aim in the study. Some only prefer to narrate an event, a fact, or a picture, but some would like to dig deeper into the content, even to the one hiding behind the text, in an effort to explore a new discovery or induce a novel conclusion. Bryman (2004:188-189) claimed that it becomes necessary to probe beneath the surface in order to ask deeper questions about what is happening. And then a further level of interpretation is likely to be entailed when the researcher seeks to demonstrate a disposition in the texts being analyzed.

Basing on the above, content analysis contains one or two major approaches: coding the narratives according to discrete themes or categories and rating the narratives on continuous dimensions. However when the process of coding is thematic, a more interpretative approach needs to be taken because thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting (Bryman, 2004:188-189, Patton, 2002:437-438). Description forms the bedrock of qualitative reporting and good description takes the reader into the setting being described.

Specifically in this study, coding data refers to coding the text of the stories, including their title, the leading part, the body, the context, the discourse and the attitude that reporters have in their coverage etc. The coding relevant to how a journalist reports an event will further be devoted to exploring the reasons why he or she reports that way and further to explore why he or she has a negative, positive or neutral attitude in his or her reports.

Finding Patterns

The process of coding data is analyzing the content, which is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. Thereby, Patton (2002:453) says that the core meanings found through content analysis are often called patterns or themes. The item 'pattern' usually refers to a descriptive finding while a 'theme' takes a more categorical or topical form. In an example of Patton (2002), he described that the content analysis revealed a *pattern* of reporting participants being afraid when rappelling down cliffs and running river rapids; many also initially experienced the group process of sharing personal feelings as evoking some fear. Those 'patterns' make "dealing with fear" a major *theme* of the wilderness education program experience.

A clear procedure refined from the above descriptions is that the first step is to, transform the abstract content analysis into valuable findings; secondly, to accord to findings, clear up a pattern among those findings and finally, though the theme has been gradually forming during the process of picking up findings and looking for the pattern, until the above two steps are complete, the establishment of the theme can be finally settled down. Thus, in this study, the concrete reporting patterns of the two newspapers will be presented through comparisons and analyses among the news items. The patterns might be close in either the number, such as the sum, the proportion, and the percentage; or they might be more related to the specific textual description. The conclusion reflected from the patterns is the thing relevant to the step of labelling theme.

Labeling Theme

The step of coding data to finding pattern in order to form the theme is a process that uses more inductive analysis of the qualitative method. Patton (2002:453) points out that the inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds towards general patterns, which involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one's data. Francis Bacon is known for his emphasis on *induction*. He defined *induction* as the use of direct observation to confirm ideas and to link together observed facts to form theories or explanations of how natural phenomenon work. Bryman (2004) and

Patton (2002:129) both emphasize that inductive approach is one of the strengths of qualitative methods.

Coding data and finding pattern consist of the preconditions of labelling theme. After the establishment of the theme, the weight of analysis turns more to deductive methods because with the deductive analysis, the data is analyzed according to an existing framework. Priest (1996:8) indicates that a deductive model is one in which the researcher reasons from the general to the specific, beginning with a theory, and an explanatory idea that can be generalized to predict what will happen in a new situation. Thus the function of labelling theme is to reconfirm the rationality and legitimacy of the theme that has been chosen and prepare to guide the deployment for the next step of developing categories.

Developing Categories

Patton ranked 'developing categories' as the last one but that does not mean that this step is the least important. Rather, developing categories functions as a comprehensive complement of the Labelling Theme. Taking advantage of different categories, the researcher offers plenty of profound evidences in an effort to support the theme. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the inquirer comes to understand patterns that exist in the phenomenon being investigated (Patton, 2002:55).

In short, among the above four steps, labelling theme can be regarded as the centre and the turning-point of all the rest. The first two steps go to the destination of finding a theme, while after the establishment of the theme; the last step serves for further strengthening the theme. The four parts interact with each other.

Connecting the above to this study, the process will be as follows: coding the stories collected from the two newspapers, looking for a pattern to ensure a theme that reflects the problems existing in the two newspapers, and then expanding the problems and interpreting this theme, before finally applying the method of comparison in the various categories to further interpret the theme.

2.4 The Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

As mentioned above, both the quantitative and qualitative methods have strong stakes at hand. The scholars from each side have been holding their arguments in debates for decades.

Usually, the choice of a method in a study depends on two factors: reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept. Three prominent factors involved when considering whether a measure is reliable are:

stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency. Reliability is also related to the precision in the research. In the qualitative part of this study, 90 news items were directly collected from the main web page of the two newspapers. Even though the collecting time was 2007, all the news stories can be found even now through the search engine of their website.

Validity refers to the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) is devised to gauge a measure (Bryman, 2004:71-72). The validity means relevance and authenticity. The only data -- 90 news stories-- in this study all signed the name of the journalists or the correspondents. Even those news items that the *New York Times* reprinted from the release of the Associated Press, or the one that the *People's Daily* reprinted from the Xinhua News Agency, were all marked with the original source. As a result, the nature of the reliability and validity ensure the exploitability of the data and the possibility of interpreting data.

In qualitative research, theory is supposed to be an outcome of an investigation rather than something that precedes it. However, some scholars like Silverman (1993:24), argue that such a depiction of qualitative research is 'out of tune with the greater sophistication of contemporary field research design, born out of accumulated knowledge of interaction and greater concern with issues of reliability and validity'. In Bryman's (2004:268) words, qualitative research is more usually regarded as denoting an approach in which theory and categorization emerge out of the collection and analysis of data.

The advantage of a quantitative approach is that it is possible to measure the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data. This gives a broad, generalized set of findings presented succinctly and parsimoniously. Davies and Mosdell (2006:27) argue that quantitative content analysis will allow you to analyze a greater number of examples of a particular type of text by applying the same criteria to each instance. By contrast, qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. This increases the depth of understanding of the cases and situations studied but reduce generalizing (Patton, 2002:14). Nevertheless, qualitative researchers are concerned with explanation and applying inductive approach to explore the finding. As such these methods involve a great deal of attention being paid to each individual text, which might influence the objective judgment of the study from a certain extent (Bryman, 2004:280, Davies and Mosdell 2006). Qualitative methods also often apply comparative analysis, seeking to recover the complexity of particular situations by recognizing the conjectural and context-specific character of causation (Patton, 2002:492).

Quantitative researchers criticize qualitative research that it is of less value because it is too impressionistic and subjective (Priest, 1996:8, Bryman, 2004:284). By these criticisms they usually mean that qualitative findings rely too much on the researcher's often unsystematic views about what is significant and important, and also upon the close personal relationships that the researcher frequently strikes up with the people studies. On the other hand, qualitative social science researchers argue that quantitative researchers tend towards the concreteness of the objects of their study—that is, they trick themselves into thinking that abstractions like attitudes, values, and content themes are objectively real when they are actually just convenient categories invented by the researcher (Priest, 1996:6).

The concrete features of the quantitative and qualitative methods are summarized by Bryman (2004: 286-287) as follows:

Number vs. Words: Quantitative researchers are often portrayed as preoccupied with applying measurement procedures to social life, while qualitative researchers are seen as using words in the presentation of analyses of society.

Static vs. Process: Quantitative research is frequently depicted as presenting a static image of social reality with its emphasis on relationships between variables. Qualitative research is often depicted as attuned to the unfolding of events over time and to the interconnections between the actions of participants of social settings.

Generalization vs. Contextual understanding: Whereas quantitative researchers want their findings to be a generalization of the relevant population, the qualitative researcher seeks an understanding of behaviour, values, beliefs, and so on in terms of the context in which the research is conducted.

2.5 Sampling and Case Study

In many cases, the method of sampling is used in social research, regarding special population as the object. Bryman (2004:87) defines sample as which reflects the population accurately so that it is a microcosm of the population. Patton (2002:40) also claims that sampling is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, and not empirical generalization from a sample to a population. In regards to this study, representative samples will be selected from 90 news stories in terms of their unique character, i.e. the theme or the similar content.

After selection of the samples, a case analysis will be done. Case analysis refers to organized data and furthermore entails in-depth study. Well-constructed case studies are holistic and context sensitive. The purpose of the case study is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. The term case study can refer to either the process of analysis or the product of the

analysis, or both (Patton, 2002:447). Davies & Mosdell (2006:65) echo that case study is where you focus on just one or two examples of your focus of interest.

Both sampling and case study will not be independent as a special chapter or a part within one chapter. Instead, they will combine with the qualitative method and perform a complementary role in explaining the findings.

The quantitative, qualitative method and the sampling will contribute to answering the research question: how the *People's Daily* reported issues of the United States and how the *New York Times* reported Chinese issues in the same period of 15 days. Those methods will also help to present the answer to another research question of whether the two newspapers from two different countries are able to report each other's countries correctly and objectively. Those presentations will be expanded in detail in the next chapter: the presentation of the finding.

Chapter 3: Presentation of the Finding

3.1 Introduction

In simple terms, this chapter will use the methods that have been introduced in the previous chapter in order to answer two of the three research questions of this study. In order to achieve this goal, this chapter is divided into two broad sections, namely; findings through quantitative methods and findings through qualitative methods. In the first section, a quantitative empirical presentation of the material is made by comparing and analyzing four categories. The four categories include a portion of the selected news items, the topics of the news items, the amount of the words in the news items and the genre. In addition, three different attitudes of reporters i.e. positive, negative and neutral attitude, are employed in the comparison and analysis of the above four categories as an important index to measure objectivity in the news coverage.

In regards to three attitudes, if a story reflects more positive aspects in the content, then it can be classified into a category named positive attitude; if a story focuses more on negative aspects, then it can be grouped into the category of negative attitude; and lastly, if a story merges both negative and positive aspects, then it can be classified into a category called neutral attitude. Furthermore, if the attitude in a story is not very clear, it will also be included into the neutral category. For instance, the story entitled ‘Chinese Police Arrest 28 in Riot against Family Planning Laws’ and the story ‘Venezuela Protests against U.S. Interference in Internal Affairs’ are classified into the group with the negative attitude because the stories reflect the negative information or use the criticized tone in the stories. The story like ‘From Torture to Plaintiff: a Pilgrim’s Progress in China’ and the story ‘Gates Expressed Optimism about the Future of Sino-US Relations’ belong to the group with the positive attitude due to the positive information described in the stories. Attitude here could refer to the tone of the content in the story as the examples above. Attitude can also refer to the reporting angle that how reporters describe an affair. For example, in reporting the event of China-US Talk, the story ‘China Talk Don’t Solve Major Issues’ is reported from a negative angle while the story ‘The Second Term of China-US Talk closed’ could regarded as the story reported from a neutral angle. Therefore the attitude in a news story can depend on a news affair or a journalist’s reporting angle. In some researches, those news items with a negative attitude are called “bad news” while those with a positive attitude are called “good news.”

In the qualitative section, a lot of focus is placed on content analysis. Here, the analyses and comparisons are conducted among the news items that have common or similar points in the two newspapers. Those news items are classified into three

groups, namely, the Same Theme, Foreign Policy, and Own Characters. Furthermore, the title of the news item, the number of the words in the news item and the genre, as well as, the already mentioned attitudes above also contributes to a further detailed comparison.

This chapter is treated separately because each of the methods can easily present the traits and the problems of either of the two newspapers. Specifically, this means that the traits of the *New York Times* are more explicit through the quantitative method while the traits of the *People's Daily* are clear with the qualitative method.

3.2 Brief Overview of the Two Newspapers

Within a period of two weeks from May 24th to June 7th of 2007, the Chinese newspaper, the *People's Daily* published 47 pieces of coverage on the United States while the American newspaper, the *New York Times* published 46 items related to issues on China. Because three pieces of reports in the *People's Daily* were picture news, they will not be included in the later analysis and comparison. Therefore, the total number of news items in the *People's Daily* can be viewed as 44, and in addition to 46 from the *New York Times*, the total number of news items in this study comes to 90. All the news items were collected from the website of the two newspapers which can be found at any time through the search engine function on the newspapers' main-page. During the period of study i.e. 15 days, both newspapers had one day on which there was no coverage at all concerning each of their respective countries. These were June 3rd for the *New York Times* and June 7th for the *People's Daily*.

There are obviously differences between the Internet edition of *New York Times* and the printed version, both in presentation and in content. The Internet news stories are in general shorter than the ones printed. By contrast, the stories in the Internet edition of the *People's Daily* are the same as those printed.

3.3 Findings through Quantitative Method

90 news items will be analyzed in different categories namely; the type of the topics; secondly, the number of the words in the text, and lastly; the genre. After a general analysis of these four categories, 90 news items from the two newspapers will be classified into three categories depending on the attitude in the text.

3.3.1 Percentage of Selected News Items and Attitude

The two charts below present the selected reports in percent of total numbers of news stories published in the study period by the two papers. The selected reports refer to the news items about either China in the *New York Times* or about the US in the *People's Daily*. These percentages indicate how much space both the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times* allocate to stories about the US and China, respectively. Or how much they give priority to the US and China respectively, relative to other stories.

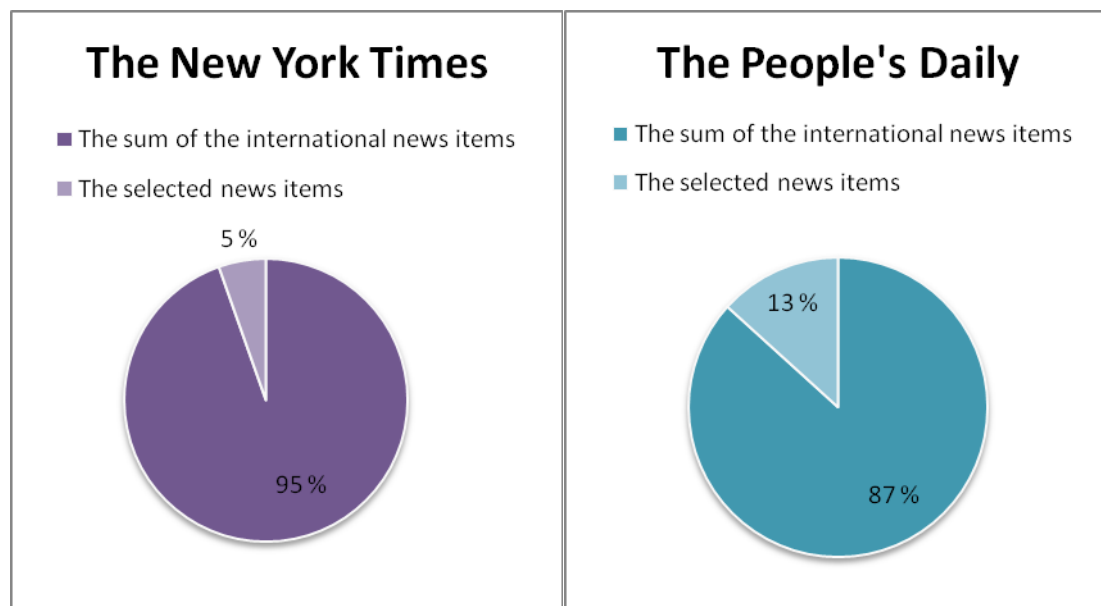


Chart 1 & Chart 2

The sum of international news items on the *New York Times*' chart was taken from two sections on the website of the newspaper i.e. the business section and the world section. This is because issues related to China are normally reported about in these two sections. Thus the sum of international news items is the total number of stories in the above two sections within the given time period. From May 24th to June 7th, there were 806 pieces of items published in these two sections. The selected news items refer to the news items related to Chinese issues i.e. 46 pieces, giving a percentage of 5, as is illustrated in Chart 1.

The sum of international news items in the *People's Daily* came from one section, namely; World. News coverage of U.S. issues is normally found in this section. During the 15-day period, 288 pieces of entries were published in the World section of the *People's Daily*, among which, 44 pieces were related to the U.S. As a result, the percentage of news items about the United States is 15 percent as is showed in Chart 2.

It appears as though the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* both give similar attention to both China and the US respectively as shown by the almost equal number of selected news items in the two newspapers i.e. 46 news items about China in the *New York Times* and 44 news items about the U.S. in the *People's Daily*. However, when we compare these numbers with the sum of international news items of the two newspapers, the difference in the percentages of the two newspapers is very huge i.e. 15 percent and 5 percent. That is a reflection of how much more the *People's Daily* gives priority to the U.S. as compared to the space allocated to Chinese affairs by the *New York Times*, which add up to a minority of the total articles published.

The Scenario in the *New York Times*

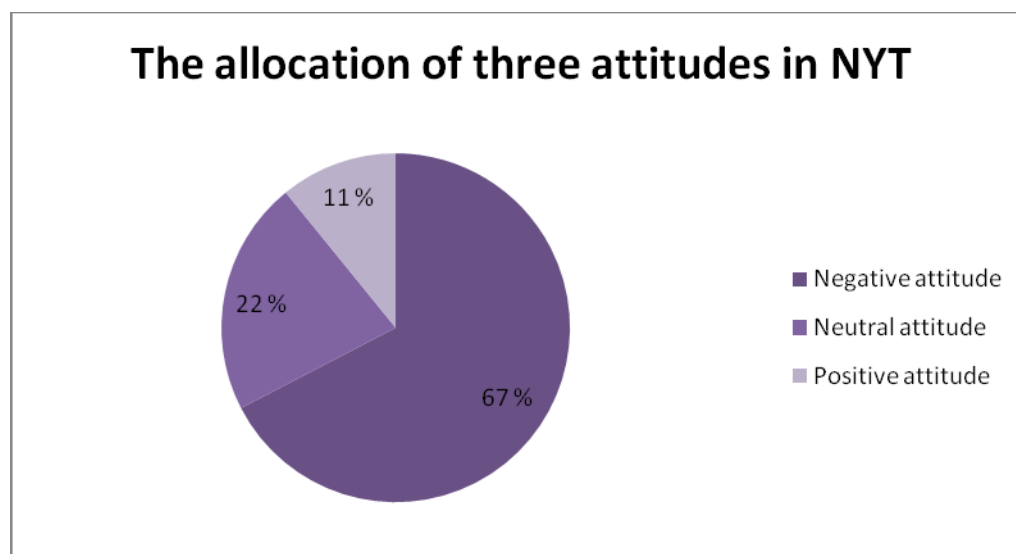


Chart 3

Out of the 46 news items on Chinese issues that were published in the *New York Times* during that period, 31 were negative, 10 were neutral and the remaining 5 were positive, giving percentages of 67 percent, 22 percent, and 11 percent, respectively as shown in the above chart 3. According to the above figures, the percentage of negative news items outweighs that of both the positive and the neutral news items, almost twice as much. In addition, although the neutral news items did not account for the largest number, they were still twice as much as the number of the positive news items. According to this percentage, the difference between the positive and negative news items is as large as six. This means that *The New York Times* had an extremely more negative view on Chinese issues.

The Scenario in the People's Daily

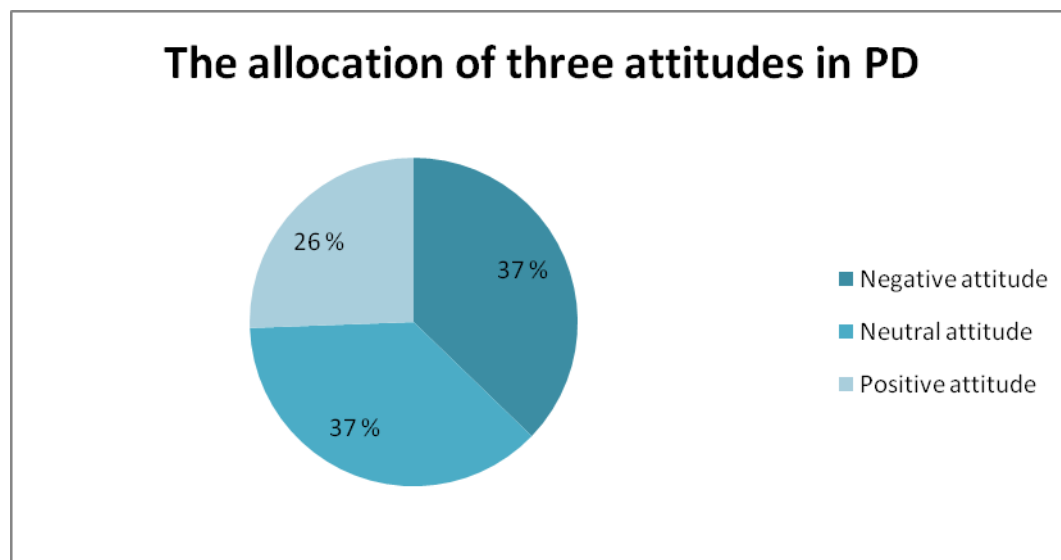


Chart 4

Out of the 44 items published in the *People's Daily*, there were 16 news items with a negative attitude, 16 with a neutral attitude and 12 with a positive attitude, with the following percentages respectively; 37 percent, 37 percent and 26 percent. Although the percentage of news items with a negative attitude still ranks top as it does in the *New York Times*, it was not the only top one. This is because the news items with a neutral attitude in the *People's Daily* have the same percentage as that of the news items with a negative attitude. Another observation is that the difference in the news items among the three attitudes is not very huge i.e. it is only a difference of 4 news items.

Comparison of the Percentage and Attitude

Below is a summary of the implication of the figures showing the percentage and attitude in the news items published in the two newspapers:

67%: 37% – the percentage of news items with a negative attitude published in the *New York Times* and in the *People's Daily*; the *New York Times* had more news items with negative information about China twice as much as the *People's Daily* had about the United States.

22%: 37% – percentage of news items with a neutral attitude published in the *New York Times* and in the *People's Daily*; the *People's Daily* had more stories with neutral standpoints in its reporting about U.S. as compared to the *New York Times'* stories with neutral views on China's issues.

11 %: 26 % – percentage of news items with a positive attitude published in the *New York Times* and in the *People's Daily*; the *People's Daily* reported much more positively about the U.S. than the *New York Times* did about China.

26: 4 -- The difference between news items with a negative attitude and news items with a positive attitude in the *New York Times* and in the *People's Daily*; the difference is as much as six times between two figures, further proving that the *New York Times* focuses more on negative information about China.

3.3.2 The Nature of Topics and Attitude

In this section, 90 items will be separated into six categories due to the diversity in the topics, namely; Politics, Society, Business, Health and Environment, Military and Science and Technology. The stories will first be placed under the categories in which they lie and then counted before further analyzing as to whether the stories have a positive, a negative or a neutral attitude, after which a percentage of the three mentioned attitudes in each of the different categories will be calculated.

The Case of the *New York Times*

Table 1

	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Sum
Politics	6	3	0	9
Business	10	2	1	13
Society	5	4	3	12
Science and Technology	1	1	0	2
Health and Environment	8	0	0	8
Military	1	0	1	2
Sum	31	10	5	46

According to Table 1 above, the *New York Times* gives most attention to stories about China's business. Next in line are the stories on society, then stories on politics, followed by stories on health and environment. The above four topics account for 91

percent of all the news items. The remaining two topics on Military and Science and Technology were given very little attention by the *New York Times*.

When it comes to attitude, the topic of Society had the most stories with a neutral attitude, accounting for 40 percent of the total news items, but with a total of only 4 news items. Next in line are the topics of Politics and Business, with 3 news items and 2 respectively. Important to note is that the topics of Health and Environment and Military did not have any news item with a neutral attitude.

This situation is more obvious when looking at news items with a positive attitude. Under the topics of Politics, Science and Technology and Health and Environment, no news item had a positive attitude. On the other hand, it was under the topic of Society in which most news items with a positive attitude were recorded, although it should be noted that the number is as small as 3 news items.

The Business news category that had most stories written about China had in fact most stories with a negative attitude i.e. 10 pieces of news items accounting for 32 percent of the total number of news items. Following the Business topic are the topics of Health and Environment and Politics. Although the two topics of Military and Science and Technology only consisted of 2 news items respectively, one of each of them had a negative attitude.

Furthermore, in the topics of Politics, Business and Health and Environment, the negative attitude dominates all 3 topics, with 67percent, 77 percent and 100 percent respectively.

The Case of the *People's Daily*

Table 2

	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Sum
Politics	5	6	1	12
Business	3	7	5	15
Society	2	1	2	5
Science and Technology	0	1	0	1
Health and Environment	0	1	2	3
Military	6	0	2	8
Sum	16	16	12	44

From the above table 2, the topic with the highest number of news items in the *People's Daily* is Business followed by the following; Politics, Military and Society. This means that the *People's Daily* is more interested in the U.S.'s business as well as its politics. On the other hand, the *People's Daily* is not very interested in the topics of Science and Technology, and Health and Environment of the U.S.

When it comes to attitude, the topic of Business contains the most number of news items with a positive attitude, accounting for 42 percent of the total number of the news items with this attitude. The topics of Society, Health and Environment, and Military contain 2 news items with a positive attitude. Science and Technology does not have any news items with a positive attitude.

The topics of Business and Politics consist of the highest number of news items with a neutral attitude. The percentage of these two topics reaches 82. Besides the topic of Military that does not contain any news items in this category, the rest of the topics, each have only one news item with a neutral attitude.

The topics of Military and Politics consist of the highest number of news items with a negative attitude which contribute 69 percent of the total number in this category.

Although the number of news items with a negative attitude in the *People's Daily* ranks highest, the number of news items with a neutral attitude shares top position with it. And the number of news items with a positive attitude under the topic of Business is higher than the number of stories with a negative attitude; which is only 3 news items. The topic of Politics takes second position with the most number of the news items in the *People's Daily*. Although the number of news items with a negative attitude under this topic is 5, it still lags behind in the number of news items with a neutral attitude. It is only under the topic of Military that the number of news items with a negative attitude is higher than that of the sum of news items with both positive and neutral attitudes.

Comparison and Conclusion

Judging from the general percentage of the three attitudes in the two newspapers as well as a detailed analysis using six different topics, the two newspapers share some similarities while at the same time, they do have some differences.

- 1) Business is the most popular topic in both newspapers. The topic of Politics takes second position in the *People's Daily* while in the *New York Times*, it takes the third position. On the other hand, the topic of Science and Technology is not popular in both newspapers.
- 2) While the *New York Times* concerned more with China's social problems, the *People's Daily* on the other hand puts more consideration on the US Military development.
- 3) The number of news items with a negative attitude under some topics is limited in the *People's Daily* while the number of news items with a positive attitude is limited in the *New York Times*.
- 4) It is in the distribution of the three attitudes in the two newspapers that a big difference lies. When the *People's Daily* is interested in the business and political issues of the US, the attitude in these two topics leans more towards a neutral one; while on the contrary, these two topics in the *New York Times* lean towards the negative attitude. The news items with neutral and positive attitudes in any given topic in the *New York Times* were very few and limited as well.

3.3.3 The Amount of Words and Attitude

The amount of words is connected to the length of a piece of reportage. The length of a news item reflects the degree of importance and attention accorded to it in the newsroom. Here, 90 news items will be classified into five groups in terms of the diverse quantity of words. The Chart 5 below shows the specific situation:

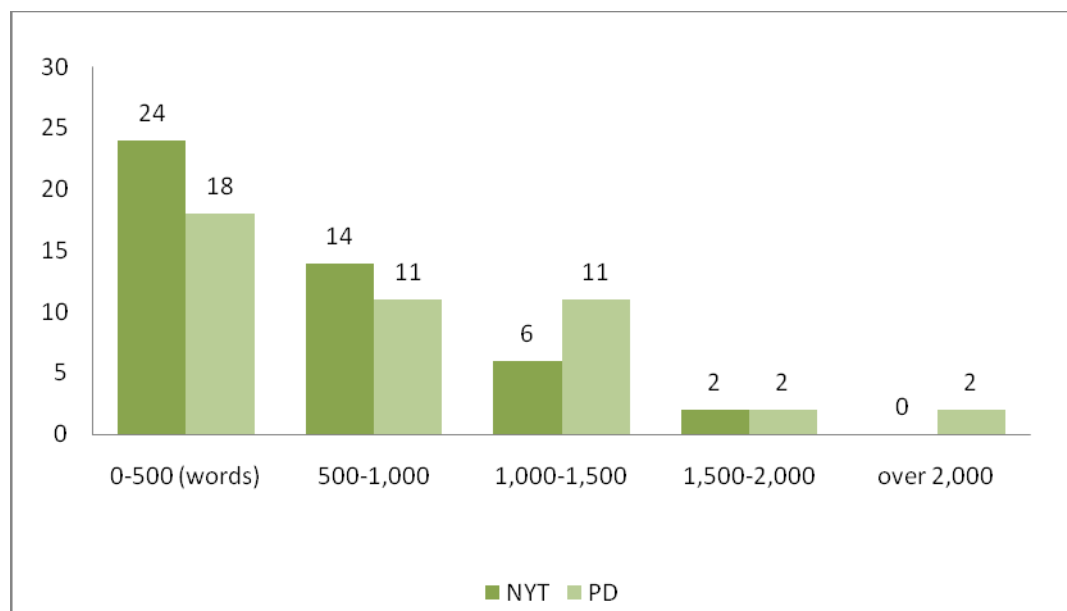


Chart 5

Comparison and Conclusion

According to the above chart 5, the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* share some similarities while at the same time the differences between them are obvious.

Among the similarities include the following:

- 1) Both newspapers tend to make short reports that reflect each other's countries i.e. less than 500 words.
- 2) The news items that are less than 1,000 words occupy more than half the percentage of the sum of news items.
- 3) The long news items that are over 1,500 words are very few in both newspapers.

The following are the differences:

- 1) An extreme phenomenon appears in the *New York Times* in that the group under 500 words accounts for the highest number of news items while the group over

1,500 has very few news items and no news item is longer than 2,000 words. The number of news items under 500 words accounts for over 50 percent of the total number of the news items. Therefore, the differences among different categories in the *New York Times* are big. That is to say, the *New York Times* prefers making shorter news reports on China's issues.

- 2) The scenario in the *People's Daily* is different. Although the group under 500 words contains the most number of news items, i.e. 41 percent, it is outweighed by the sum of news items from 500 words to 1,500 words. Another character of the *People's Daily* is that it has two news items that are over 2,000 words. In other words, though the short news items, with words less than 500 are the highest in number, the difference among the different categories is not as big as it is in the *New York Times*.
- 3) Most of the news items in the *New York Times* fall in the category of fewer than 1,000 words while for the *People's Daily*, they fall in the category of under 1,500 words. Though both newspapers have few long items, starting from the category over 1,000 words, the *People's Daily* has more or equal news items compared to those in the *New York Times*.

The attitude and the Number of words

As stated before that 67 percent news items in the *New York Times* are of a negative attitude, it would imply that under any given category of the length of the news items, the negative attitude will rank highest in each category. However the main concern is: is the percentage of the negative attitude the same in every category of the number of words? Is it possible that the category with the shortest words contains a more neutral attitude than a negative one? Or which category will display a relatively more positive attitude?

Under the category of short news items with words less than 500, the percentage of the negative attitude in the *New York Times* accounts for 70 percent. The percentage rises to 71 percent in the category with words from 500 to 1,000. But the percentage decreases by 10 per cent to 60 per cent in the category with words from 1,000 to 1,500. The rate goes down to zero in the category with words over 1,500 because both items in this category display a neutral attitude.

Since both the negative attitude and the neutral attitude have an equal number of news items in the *People's Daily*, these two attitudes together account for the highest percentage. In the category with the words under 500, the negative attitude takes 44 percent, forming the biggest percentage among the negative attitude in other categories. But in the category with the words between 500 and 1,000, the rate at

which the negative attitude appears in the news items drops to 27 percent. Instead, in the same category, the neutral attitude takes the top percentage, of 45 percent. The situation swings a little when it comes to the category with words from 1,000 to 1,500. Here, the number of news items with a negative attitude takes top position again with 36 percent. Nevertheless, in the four news items with over 1,500 words, the negative attitude is completely excluded and instead, there are three news items with a neutral attitude and one news item with a positive attitude.

The short news items under the category of 500 words consist of the biggest group among the six categories in both newspapers while at the same time; this category contains the most number of news items with a negative attitude. On the other hand, in the long news items of over 1,500 words in both newspapers, there is a shift to a more neutral attitude with a few positive attitudes involved. Furthermore, the longer a news item is, the less of a negative attitude it displays. The only big difference between the two newspapers appears in the category of under 500 words, where 70 percent of the news items in the *New York Times* is of a negative attitude while in the *People's Daily*, the percentage of news items with a negative attitude is 45 percent.

3.3.4 The Genre and Attitude

Genre refers to the forms or manner in which a reporter narrates a story. The genres were classified into eight different groups, namely; News, Feature, Commentary or Opinion, Portrait, Document, Dialogue, Reader's Letter and Background of Introduction.

The genre of News, for example, will contain Brief News and Middle-length news. Normally, Brief News tends to be hard news. Hard news events are timely and are reported almost automatically by most newspapers (Lindley, 1993:16). Middle-length News also refers to hard news but is usually longer in content. Compared to news, the genre of Feature downplays timeliness and it builds around interesting sidelights on events or intriguing people (Lindley, 1993:75-76). The genre of Commentary or Opinion is a view of an incident or a phenomenon by the readers or the newsmen. Portrait is a close-up description of a given person, celebrity, politician or artists etc. Background of Introduction refers to an explanation related to the history of a specific event. It could be a review of the history or the origin, the development, the agreement etc. of an event. Document here points to a record of the current situation. It can be a content record of a conference, or an explanation of the outcome of an international negotiation. The big difference between the genres of Background of Introduction and Document is the time concept. The former tells about the history, while the latter focuses on the current moment. Reader's letter means that readers send their questions to the media and then the media publish both the question and the answers to the questions as given by the media themselves. Dialogue refers to the

conversations among the editor, reporter, correspondent, or scholar, who is familiar with specific fields. In most cases, the Dialogue will be surrounded with one topic or several sub-main topics, and then the editor will ask the invited guests questions.

The Specific Situation in the Two Newspapers

Table 3

Genre\ Amount	NYT	PD
News (Brief and Middle-length)	33	22
Feature	8	4
Commentary Or Opinion	4	14
Portrait	1	0
Background Introduction	0	1
Document	0	1
Reader's letter	0	1
Dialogue	0	1
Sum	46	44

As is shown in Table 3, the genre of News, including the brief and middle length categories, make up the highest percentage of genres i.e. 50 percent in both newspapers. And the percentage even shoots to 72 percent in the *New York Times*. This high percentage in the *New York Times* implies that the number of news items in other genres is very small, and it also diminishes the category of the genres per se, i.e. only four kinds of genres involved. The case of the *People's Daily* is quite different. It has more categories of genres i.e. 8 kinds in total, although some of them only have a few news items.

It is important to note which genre takes the second and third position in both newspapers. For the *New York Times*, it is the Feature genre, with 8 news items while for the *People's Daily*, it is the Commentary genre with 14 pieces. Although the genre of Feature takes third place in the *People's Daily*, it only contains 4 news items. Similarly, the genre of Commentary, which takes third position in the *New York Times*, only contains 4 news items.

To sum it up, both newspapers put a lot of emphasis on the genre of News. In addition, the *New York Times* tends to use Feature genres more to report on issues about China while the *People's Daily* tends to use more of the Commentary genre to explain issues concerning the United States. The rest of the other categories of genres have very few news items.

The Attitude in the Genres

In order to analyze the relationship between genres and attitude, all eight genres will be roughly classified into four groups, namely News, Feature, Opinion and others. Since the genres of Portrait, Document, and Dialogue altogether have very few news items involved, they are together classified into the category of “others”.

Therefore the specific situation is as follows:

Table 4

	NYT			PD		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive
News	26	5	2	8	8	6
Feature	2	0	6	1	0	3
Commentary	3	0	1	7	4	3
Others	0	0	1	0	4	0
Sum	31	5	10	16	16	12

The Case of the *New York Times*

Most of the news items with a negative attitude in the *New York Times* appear mainly in the genre of News, accounting for almost 79 percent in this genre and 84 percent in the total news items with a negative attitude. There are very few news items with a neutral attitude that appear in this genre while at the same time, there is a lesser number of 2 pieces of news items with a positive attitude and their percentage amounts to 6 percent. The difference among the news items with all the three attitudes in this genre is very huge.

In regards to the genre of Feature, the *New York Times* has a higher number of news items with a positive attitude as compared to the other two attitudes. The percentage

of the news items with a positive attitude in this genre accounts for 60 percent of the total number of news items with a positive attitude. Meanwhile, in this genre group, the attitude here tends to lean towards the extreme i.e. either positive or negative, with hardly a chance for neutral.

The news items with a negative attitude in the genre of Commentary again take the top position. The total number of news items, however, in this genre is as small as only 4, categorised into 3 news items with a negative attitude and 1 news item with a positive attitude.

In the last group “Others”, only one news item with a positive attitude was found.

The Case of the *People’s Daily*

Although the negative and neutral attitudes both rank top as they have the same percentage in regards to the genre of News, the difference between the number of news items with a positive attitude and the number of news items with the other two attitudes is as small as 2. Apart from that, the news items with a positive attitude in the News genre account for the highest percentage i.e. 50 percent among the other genres with a positive attitude.

In regards to the genre of Feature, a similar phenomenon occurs in the *People’s Daily*, i.e. having more news items with a positive attitude compared to the other two attitudes. But the total number of the news items in this genre is as small as 4. Three of them have a positive attitude while one has a negative one. Likewise the attitude in *People’s Daily* tends to lean to the extreme i.e. either positive or negative, with hardly any chance for neutral.

In the genre of Commentary in the *People’s Daily*, there are 14 news items, giving this genre the second position. The number of news items with a negative attitude in this genre equals to the sum of news items with the other two attitudes.

In the last group “Others”, the attitude of all the four news items here leans completely to a neutral attitude.

Comparison and Conclusion

Generally, the two newspapers share some common points: the negative attitude is mainly reflected in the genres of News and Commentary, while the positive attitude appears more in the genres of Feature and Others. Nonetheless, though the positive attitude is dominant in two categories of genre, the number of news items in these two categories is very small; hence its effect on the genre as a whole is minimal.

On further scrutiny, it is the negative attitude that is dominant overall, most especially in the *New York Times*. The *New York Times* prefers using the genre of hard news to portray Chinese issues. 33 out of 46 of the total number of news items are hard news, and among them, 26 out of 33 news items have a negative attitude. In the *People's Daily*, the situation is that 8 out of 22 news items have a negative attitude. Additionally, in the genre of Commentary, the number of the news items with a negative attitude in the *People's Daily* exceeds the number in the *New York Times*.

3.4 The Findings through Qualitative Method

In this section, qualitative methods will be used as the main method in analyzing the text of the selected 90 stories from the two newspapers. These methods are different from the quantitative methods in the sense that the latter focus more on numbers, statistics and general observation, while the qualitative methods focus more on words, processes and contextual understanding.

In order to compare the specific reporting content, exploring the differences and similarities, those news items from two newspapers but with similar characters will be divided into three groups, namely 'Same Theme' Group, 'Foreign Relations' Group, and 'Own Characters' Group. The group, 'Same Theme' will refer to those news items that were published both in the *New York Times* and in the *People's Daily*, separately but were talking about the same event. The group of 'Foreign Relations' will refer to the news items that describe the relationship of China or the United States with other countries. The group of 'Own Character' will refer to those news items that are capable of presenting the unique nature of a newspaper. A more detailed explanation and examples will be given in the following part.

In addition, as was done in the quantitative methods, the indexes about the genre, the number of the words, the topics and the three attitudes (positive, negative and neutral) will be applied in the qualitative analysis and comparison. However, only a section of the 90 news items in the two newspapers can be categorised in the three groups mentioned above and in turn classified into different groups. But those qualified news items are representative of the newspapers.

3.4.1 Group I: Same Theme

As earlier mentioned, 'Same Theme' means that the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* focused on the same event and did their coverage separately. The aim will be to discover how the two newspapers report the news event; what attitude they represent in the stories and how the editor further arranges the material of the event. By use of observation and comparison, the similarities and differences between the two newspapers will be clearly spelt out.

Within the total 90 pieces of news items, two themes were reported by both newspapers simultaneously which means they can be categorized into “Same Theme” group. The two themes are the ‘U.S. – China Talk’ and the ‘The Military Assessment of China’, respectively.

3.4.1.1 ‘U.S.—China Talk’

The ‘U.S.—China Talk’ is a strategic economic talk between the United States and China, aiming to solve the economic disputes of the two nations and thereby strengthening the cooperation between them. The Talk is held twice a year and the meeting venue keeps changing between China and the U.S.

The Case of the *People’s Daily*

The *People’s Daily* published 6 pieces of stories related to the event of ‘US-China Talk’ within 3 days. Three of them can be viewed as hard news, one piece as a commentary, one as a dialogue among the editor, journalist and the scholar, and the last one as a documentary, presenting detailed information about the outcome of the Talk. The analysis and further comparison will focus on hard news and commentary.

The titles of the three pieces of hard news that were published in the *People’s Daily* were ‘The Second-Term of China-US. Strategic Economic Talk Closed’, ‘China and U.S. Customs Sign Memo to Strengthen Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights’ and ‘U.S. President Bush Meets Wu Yi and Wu Yi Meets Lower House Speaker Pelosi’.³³

Looking at the above titles, the journalists reported the Talk from three different angles: the closing ceremony of the Talk, one of the achievements of the Talk and the meeting of the high-profile leaders of the two nations. That is to say, journalists in the *People’s Daily* prefer to directly record an event in terms of the event per se such as; the opening, the closing, the meeting and the outcome etc. This can be termed as ‘direct record’ literally.

Secondly, general sentences are the typical description in the context. In the inside paragraphs of three pieces of news, the descriptions are very general and abstract, usually without detailed examples or profound explanations to expand the sentence. Let us take the story ‘The Second-Term of China-US. Strategic Economic Talk Closed’ as an example. The lead of the story simply introduces the time, the location, and the attendants of the closing ceremony of the Talk. The next two paragraphs mainly present the statements of the Chinese side and then the statements of the U.S.

³³ This is a complex news item which contains two small pieces of news.

side are recorded in the paragraph after. For instance, in the financial field; what items the two sides talk about, in the environmental field; what the two sides discussed, etc. The journalist did not give specific information, neither background considering the proposal of the two sides nor did they extend the story to a specific perspective related to the content of the meeting. Consequently, the method used by Chinese journalists is to pay attention to a record of the proceedings of the meeting i.e. who gave the speech, what they presented, and who attended the meeting etc. The journalists were acting as a recorder of the meeting and the coverage written by the journalists was like a conference bulletin.

Following those abstract descriptions was a mention by the article of some problems existing between the two nations. Nevertheless, this vital sentence was immediately 'swallowed up' by other sentences that were emphasizing the bright future of the two nations and the profound meaning of this Talk. The story ended with one sentence saying; 'the third section of the Talk would be held in December of this year'.³⁴

Therefore, the characteristics in reporting by Chinese journalists could be concluded as: direct record, general description and simplified dispute or problems. These characteristics are also contained in other reports of the *People's Daily*.

On the issue of the attitude expressed in the text, it is important to cast some light on the coverage by observing it from three titles namely; 'The Second-Term of China-US. Strategic Economic Talk Closed', 'China and U.S. Customs Sign Memo in Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights' and 'U.S. President Bush Meets Wu Yi, Wu Yi Meets Lower House Speaker Pelosi'. It can be said that no words in these titles expressed a positive or negative inclination. Therefore all these three titles can be viewed as possessing a neutral attitude.

The same can be said for the leads in the stories. Two specific leads in the hard news generally summarize the event without giving an obvious standpoint or attitude. In other words, from the lead, the reader finds it difficult to tell what attitude the journalist has in the story. For instance, the lead of the story entitled; 'U.S. President Bush Meets Wu Yi, Wu Yi Meets Lower House Speaker Pelosi' is almost the same as its title, only that it describes the specific time, location and the main figures in the story. Thus, this kind of lead can only be viewed as one with a neutral attitude. Only one lead out of the three selected stories revealed a positive attitude. The lead indicated that signing the memo in order to strengthen the intellectual property rights is one of the significant outcomes of the U.S.-China Talk. In summary, it can be said

³⁴ Refer to Appendix 1

that two of the leads had a neutral attitude while the remaining one had a positive attitude.

Concerning the body of the stories, three pieces of the selected stories all mentioned the problems existing between the two nations but normally in a few words, sometimes as few as one sentence. It seems that Chinese journalists leave more space for presenting positive information.

Looking at the characters of the *People's Daily* from the angle of editors, it can be noted that within three days, six pieces of stories about the Talk were issued. Among them, one was longer than 2,000 words, two were between 1,000 to 2,000 words, another two were between 500 and 1,000 words, and the last one was less than 500 words. These six stories consisted of four genres, namely; hard news, opinion, dialogue among editor, journalist and scholars, and document genre, which introduced the aftermath of the conference. The diversity in the length and genre of the stories reveals that the editor took advantage of this diversity in order to reflect on the event.

Commentary or Opinion is another significant factor used by an editor to arrange the layout of a newspaper. As mentioned in the findings of the quantitative methods, the number of news items in the Commentary took second position in the genre category. Basing on that, it can be said that Commentary acts as an important component in the *People's Daily*. Out of the six stories in the *People's Daily*, there was one piece of commentary. As analyzed above, hard news is seldom supported by vivid standpoints or strong attitudes. This situation however changes in the case of the Opinion genre. First of all, the positive attitude of this commentary was contained directly in its title; 'Dialogue and Consultation to Seek Consensus'.³⁵ In contrast with hard news, which avoided the disputes, two big paragraphs in the main body of this commentary mentioned the divergences and the problems of the two nations. Subsequently, the article was confronting the divergences and problems, while probably attempting to find a solution to them. Actually, the leading thoughts in this article were centred on how to regard those divergences and reduce or completely solve the problems.

Nonetheless, one detail of this commentary has to be pointed out. This commentary was not an editorial commentary but rather, it was written by a research fellow from the United States of the Institute of China Contemporary International Relations. The byline of this commentary showed that it was a personal opinion, and not that of the newspaper.

³⁵ Refer to Appendix 2

The Case of the *New York Times*

The *New York Times* published three pieces of stories related to the U.S.-China Talk within three days. Two of them were hard news and one was a commentary. The titles of the three stories were as follows: ‘China Talks Don’t Resolve Major Issues’, ‘Chinese Officials Extol Benefits of U.S. Relations’ and ‘Five Days, China Makes a U.S. Deal, But It’s Not With Washington’. The former two are the hard news stories while the latter is the commentary.

The two stories under hard news had different frames. The frame of the article ‘China Talks Don’t Resolve Major Issues’ gave a general impression of what the Talk achieved; what problems the Talk left; and then the writer particularly stressed two problems: the sanction against China and the currency intervention by the Chinese administration. These two problems therefore consisted of the main theme of the whole article.³⁶ The frame of the article ‘Chinese Officials Extol Benefits of U.S. Relations’, is on the opposite side as in it first listed the same two problems and then reviewed the achievements of the Talk and gave a little introduction to the background of the Talk. At the end of the article, the journalist offered a new problem.³⁷ Although the two articles had different frames, they both outlined the problems and expanded the stories from presenting and analyzing the problems.

Another character related to the writing technique is that American journalists are very good at arguing in detail. After stating a kind of opinion or conclusion, they normally follow it up with a certain number of evidences. For instance, in the article ‘Chinese Officials Extol Benefits of U.S. Relations’, the writer wrote “but it was not clear whether China’s buying spree would help it gain political support in the United States”. After that, the writer first presented a reason that it is because ‘those purchases could raise national security concerns’. The writer then went on to give a concrete example. Moreover, in the next paragraph the writer continued to explain that ‘the investment drive has not provoked a strong reaction’. By using those statements, the writer strengthened his own view.

Furthermore, in order to state these two problems, the journalist brought out plenty of detail to expand the problems by presenting the background, the reasons that lead to the problems, and the consequences of these problems etc. Meanwhile, in the process of presenting the problem, the journalist simultaneously introduced the information about the Talk. That is to say, the writing technique of journalists from the *New York*

³⁶ Refer to Appendix 3

³⁷ Refer to Appendix 4

Times is to start from the smaller aspects of the story and then gradually moving to the overall picture of the story.

In short, the *New York Times*' journalists prefer emphasizing problems, using detailed description, and expanding the whole picture starting from the smaller aspects then moving on to the bigger picture.

The more the journalists emphasize problems and explore them, the higher the chances that the news story will have a negative attitude. By simply looking at the two titles of hard news, one seemed to hold a negative attitude while the other one tended to lean more towards a positive attitude.

But judging from the leads of the two articles, both presented a negative attitude. One used 'little progresses' and the other used 'little headway' to prove that the Chinese side did not achieve so much in this period of the U.S. – China Talk. This manner of tone extended to the main body of the articles.

In the body part of the text, journalists are good at using comparison. In other words, they present both the positive and negative sides of a story at the same time, but nevertheless, in the end, the negative side always outweighs the positive and becomes the main tone of the story. The term 'but' was often used to transit from the positive description to the negative part. For instance, in the article 'China Talks Don't Resolve Major Issues', the journalist quoted the words of the Representative of Democrats, Mr. Paulson, the Treasury Secretary to evaluate the positive result of the Talk, such as "went well", "were worthwhile", "constructive and friendly". Nonetheless, after that brief appraisal, the journalist went on to use more space to highlight the problems left in the Talk. Thus both articles actually possess a negative attitude.

In regards to the angle of the editor, two of the three stories selected are hard news and both of them have more than 1,000 words. Another one is an opinion or commentary, and is less than 500 words.

The percentage of the commentary in the *New York Times* is not as much as it is in the *People's Daily* but still, it ranks a high position in the categories of genres of the *New York Times*. This opinion about China-US Talk is less than 500 words which is a big difference when compared to the *People's Daily* in which the commentary is normally longer than 1,000 words. Nevertheless, a short story does not necessarily mean that the story carries less weight.

The title of the commentary ‘Five Days; China Makes U.S. Deal, but It’s Not with Washington’ portrays a negative conclusion.³⁸ It reflects that though China achieved a good result in the commercial deal, it did not do so in the political field. In the body of the commentary, the author emphasized two sides of the Talk i.e. the Chinese side, and the U.S. side. But the leverage was not balanced towards the two sides. In the first paragraph, the author directly pointed out; ‘the Talk ended with unfinished businesses’. Next, the author applied the term such as ‘not much help’, ‘limited agreement’, ‘little progress’ and ‘enact punishments if China does not move faster on trade issues’, further portraying a more negative attitude towards the Talk. In the last paragraph, the author allocated some space to the Chinese side but still emphasized that China’s only achievement was in the business field but not in the political field.

3.4.1.2 China’s Military Assessment

Another theme represented in both newspapers is China’s Military Assessment. It is a report made by the U.S. Pentagon to assess China’s military power. The U.S. Pentagon publishes a new assessment every year. In regards to this assessment, the *People’s Daily* issued two stories while the *New York Times* published one.

One of the articles that appeared in the *People’s Daily* was a byline comment and the other was a summary from a press conference held by China’s Foreign Ministry. The interesting thing is that the *New York Times* did not report the news about the assessment but rather, it published an article about China rejecting the assessment.

In contrast with the tone that the *People’s Daily* had in the theme of the China-US Talk, in which the attitude was not apparent or was even hidden on purpose, in the military assessment, the attitude of the *People’s Daily* is tougher and more explicit. The title of the commentary ‘To Mislead International Public Opinion of the Report’ directly pointed out that this report might mislead the readers.³⁹

Likewise, in the context, the tough standpoint is obvious. At the same time, the writer also applied comparison to outline his opinion in the same manner as the American journalists did in their reporting. At the beginning, the writer cited the sentences of Robert M. Gates, the U.S. Defence Secretary as saying that this report ‘didn’t exaggerate fact’. Following it, the writer turned to prove that ‘this report purposely exaggerates China’s military threat.’ And then, the writer borrowed the words directly from the military assessment in an effort to prove its inaccuracy. The writer then concluded as follows; ‘regardless of the fact, the assessment of American Pentagon

³⁸ Refer to Appendix 5

³⁹ Refer to Appendix 6

that deliberately exaggerated so-called Chinese military threat is not persuasive'. Important to mention here, is that this comment, like the one in the China-US. Talk, is a byline comment. It might not represent the standpoint of the newspaper per se. The day after this comment was published in the *People's Daily*, the *New York Times* issued another story with the title 'China Disputes Defense Assessment'.⁴⁰ Definitely when the *People's Daily* is disputing the conclusion of the Pentagon assessment, the *New York Times* will in turn dispute the opinion of the *People's Daily*. In the beginning, the article directly quoted a sentence from the *People's Daily* and indicated its origin. This 'borrowing' model continued until the third paragraph. After that, the writer used one sentence to summarize the Pentagon assessment. And then, a new paragraph began with a Defense official saying that 'they had intended to give the report a balanced tone' and 'but, the Pentagon dismissed China's official defense budget as an inaccurate view of its true spending.' In the next several paragraphs, the writer used data from the U.S. Defense to support its opinion. In the last two paragraphs, the writer gave the chance to the Chinese side. But these two paragraphs barely made up two sentences. It is difficult to measure the positive impact that these two sentences had on the Chinese side, but it was quite obvious that the space allocated to the Defense side was much larger than that allocated to the Chinese side.

The second article in the *People's Daily* is a summary from the press conference held by China's Foreign Ministry. In this press conference, the press spokesman posed the questions asked by the present journalists. Surely, the questions must have contained diverse aspects on the economy, politics or the military. Nonetheless, the *People's Daily* only picked the article about how the China side responded to the Defence assessment of the U.S.⁴¹ Their intention for choosing to do this is meaningful. In the lead part, the attitude of the spokesman to the question about the opinion on the Pentagon assessment was very tough i.e. 'The Chinese side expresses strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition'. This tough attitude was further strengthened by another one i.e. 'Report of the United States by playing up the so-called China threat theory is completely wrong and futile'.

3.4.1.3 Comparison and Conclusion from the 'Same Theme'

The *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* both published reports on two topics, 'China-US. Talk' and 'China's Military Assessment', but they used different attitudes, writing techniques, and a different arrangement by the editor.

- 1) The attitude in the *People's Daily* changes in terms of the topic, especially in the

⁴⁰ Refer to Appendix 7

⁴¹ Refer to Appendix 8

case of hard news. For instance a topic such as ‘China-US. Talk’ has a more neutral attitude in comparison to a topic like ‘China’s Military Assessment’, whose attitude is rather tough and direct.

The attitude has a slight difference when it comes to the commentary. The comments by the authors outside the newspapers have a straightforward attitude, whether positive or negative, depending on the topic.

On the contrary, the attitude in the *New York Times* is always leaning towards the negative side. And this attitude is normally presented directly in the lead of the stories.

- 2) The characteristics of the writing techniques in the *People’s Daily* are ‘direct record’, ‘general description’ and ‘simplified problems’. Consequently, this ‘direct record’ and ‘general description’ make journalists appear as recorders of an event rather than investigators or questioners. Those characteristics contribute to the neutral attitude in the *People’s Daily* to a certain extent. The *New York Times* tends to ‘emphasize problems’, ‘describe details’ and ‘expand the whole picture from small aspects’. It has been observed that the character of emphasizing problems tends to create a negative attitude in the news stories. The rest of the two characteristics make the coverage in the *New York Times* more specific and more readable.
- 3) When it comes to allocation of space, the *People’s Daily* has more stories compared to those in the *New York Times* under these two topics. The length of the stories in the *People’s Daily* is longer than those in the *New York Times*. In addition, the *People’s Daily* applies more categories of genre to enrich its coverage as compared to the *New York Times*.

3.4.2 GroupII: Foreign Relations

‘Foreign Relations’ refers to the relationship between the United States and other countries or regions excluding China and the relationship between China and other countries or regions excluding the United States. This group aims to explore how the *New York Times* and the *People’s Daily* present issues about foreign relations. The specific content in this group includes the countries that are reported in the stories, the themes that the journalists prefer to report about on those countries, and the attitude that the journalists have in their reporting.

The Case in the *New York Times*

There were four pieces of news stories published in the *New York Times*, which qualified to be in this group. The stories were about four countries and regions namely;

Myanmar, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Taiwan (China views Taiwan as a region rather than as a country).

Two articles were under the Health and Environment topic and they involved two Central American countries: Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The explanation for this percentage of a half could be due to the fact that these two countries were related to an emergency affair which involved contaminated toothpaste produced by China; this toothpaste was found in both of the above countries.

The rest of the two stories can be categorized as political. One story was entitled 'Myanmar: No Star as China Reviews New Capital'.⁴² It was a very short story with only 158 words. In addition, the journalist adopted a 'borrowing technique' to present the story. That means the journalist of the *New York Times* borrowed the resource from the Chinese side and then reorganized these resources into a news story, presenting another meaning of the same event. Another story was entitled 'Taiwan Loses another Friend to China'. It was an extremely brief story with 43 words in two sentences. The issue about those two stories is not how short they were but what kind of attitude the *New York Times* displayed concerning the relationship between those countries or regions and China.

In addition, all the four stories hold a negative attitude.

The Case in the *People's Daily*

The *People's Daily* published 18 pieces of stories about the relations between the U.S. and other countries or regions. Nine countries and regions were involved, namely; Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Bolivia, Russia, Sudan, Europe (Europe is regarded as one region in some stories of the *People's Daily*), and India. Five stories were connected to issues of Iran as well as European issues. Two were related to Cuba and Russia and just one story was connected to the rest of the other countries.

Nearly half of the 18 stories are brief; under 500 words, usually around 200 words. The briefs were not directly written by the journalists of the *People's Daily* but copied from Xinhua News Agency, which is the biggest and also a state-owned news agency in China.

⁴² Refer to Appendix 9

Table 5

Country	Theme	Attitude
Bolivia	Economy	Negative
Cuba	Military	Negative
	Economy	Neutral
Europe	Economy	Negative (2 stories) Neutral (3 stories)
India	Military	Negative
Iran	Politics	Neutral (4 stories) Positive (1 story)
Russia	Politics	Neutral
	Military	Negative
Sudan	Economy	Negative
Venezuela	Politics	Negative

Looking at the above table 5, there were 18 news stories that were connected to the three groups of themes i.e. military, economy and politics. Moreover, three of the military stories had a negative attitude. The news stories on the economy were split equally between the neutral and negative attitude. Among the political stories, the neutral attitude accounted for 62 percent.

In addition, the *People's Daily* adopted a kind of special coverage method to report related events i.e. combining brief stories into one piece of coverage. For instance, one of the news reports entitled; 'U.S. Declares New Sanction to Sudan', had two subtitles: 'Sudan, Arab League, and Egypt Oppose' and 'Ban Ki-moon Called on Sudan to Implement Mixed-up Agreement'. Judging from the title and subtitles, it is easy to tell that this report contains at least four briefs, namely; 'US Declares New Sanction to Sudan', 'Sudan Opposed', 'Arab League and Egypt Opposed' and 'Ban Ki-moon Called on Sudan to Implement Mixed-up Agreement'.

This method can be viewed as another borrowing technique. The newspaper indirectly expresses its own standpoint or opinion of the news even by publishing the

contradictory voice of other countries. This situation happened twice in the *People's Daily* within the selected 15 days.

The neutral attitude as well as the negative attitude dominated 9 pieces of stories, while only one story had a positive attitude. The tendency of a story to have a certain attitude depends on a specific country and also the theme of the story to a certain extent.

A look at the Iranian issue reveals that there were five pieces of news items, two of which were briefs, two were commentaries, and one was a dialogue between the editor and journalists. For the case of the two briefs, one had a neutral attitude while the other had a positive one. The two commentaries had an equal distribution of attitudes as the briefs. The dialogue had a positive attitude. Altogether, the five stories consisted of two positive attitudes and three neutral attitudes. In one of the neutral brief news, 'Iran to Send a Delegation to Participate in US-Iran Talks', the whole news item had only 181 words and the context simply describes the time, place and a little information about the US-Iran conference. In addition, there was only one sentence that revealed that this was the highest-profile meeting between the two countries after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. This description model is similar to the one I mentioned in Group I i.e. direct record, general description and avoiding problems. Moreover, in this group, the descriptions are even simpler.

Concerning the European issue, five pieces including one interview, one background introduction and three commentaries, were involved. Among them, three had a neutral attitude and two had a negative attitude. In contrast to the commentaries already introduced above, here one of commentaries was from the newspaper's own journalist. That indicates that this view of this commentary conforms to the paper's standpoint and the attitude of this commentary is neutral which further indicates that the *People's Daily* abides by the principle of not evaluating its own reports or comments.

Comparison and Conclusion

- 1) The *People's Daily* focuses more on the foreign affairs of the United States as compared to the *New York Times'* focus on China and its foreign affairs.
- 2) The countries presented in the *People's Daily* are from the regions of Asia, Europe and South America with the exception of countries from Africa and Oceania. On the contrary, the *New York Times* focuses its reports on countries connected to a specific event, especially if it is an emergency.
- 3) Both of the newspapers prefer using brief news while reporting foreign affairs. But the *People's Daily* applies diverse genres to reflect an important issue, such as

dialogue, commentary and background of introduction. This characteristic of diversity is also reflected in the selection of the theme. While the *People's Daily* focuses on politics, the economy and the military, the *New York Times* on the other hand is more random in the choice of its themes.

- 4) Both newspapers used the borrowing technique. The *People's Daily* borrowed resources from a news agency in China as well as other media outlets outside China. Similarly, the *New York Times* also took advantage of resources from other media outlets to complete the story.
- 5) In regards to the issue of attitude, the *New York Times* is more negative while reporting on Chinese issues while the *People's Daily* tends to use a negative attitude more, only where military issues are concerned. Superficially, the *People's Daily* has more news items with a neutral or a positive attitude than the *New York Times* has.

3.4.3 Group III: Own Characters

This group highlights unique and special characteristics of the two newspapers. Two specific events published in the two newspapers will be used as representatives for purposes of exploring their particularities.

The *New York Times* – the toothpaste affair

The toothpaste affair involved contaminated toothpaste that was produced by China but was being flown to other countries. According to this affair, the *New York Times* issued eight pieces of stories during the 15 days that were selected for this study. On average, it is almost one story per two days. The manner in which *New York Times* treated this event displays the traits of the newspaper:

- 1) The newspaper pays attention to the continuity of an affair/event. This is because, during the 15 days from May 24th to June 7th, there were follow-up stories on the affair that were constantly being published.
- 2) The width of the focus is very broad. The geographical scope of the reporting is not only limited inside the U.S. but also includes countries outside the U.S. such as Costa Rica and Nicaragua.
- 3) The content of the stories is rich and diverse. The stories contain the reaction of the U.S. to this emergency, for instance, 'F.D.A. to Test Toothpaste', and 'Toxic Toothpaste Made in China Is Found in U.S.'; it also includes responses from China, such as; 'China Says 2 of its Companies Played a Role in Poisonings', and 'China to Revise Rules on Food and Drug Safety', etc.

- 4) This richness and diversity is also embodied in the length of the stories. Among the eight stories published, there were briefs of less than 200 words and also stories as long as up to 1,000 words.
- 5) All those stories are hard news and they all have a negative attitude.

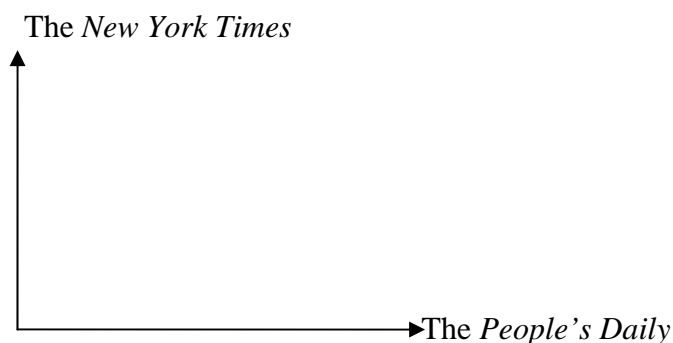
The People's Daily—U.S.-China Talk

The U.S.-China Talk was discussed as an example in the 'Same Topic' group. To avoid unnecessary repetition only the special characteristics that belong to the *People's Daily* will be stressed here:

- 1) The newspaper issued six pieces of stories related to this affair. Six of them were published in a period of three days, i.e. two news items per day on average. That implies that the *People's Daily* prefers to emphasize the importance of an event by using a certain quantity of news items.
- 2) In order to highlight this affair, the newspaper applied different genres; such as the normal news genre; 'The Second Section of U.S.-China Talk Ended', the commentary genre; 'Dialogue and Consultation to Seek Consensuses, and the Document Introduction genre; 'The Second Sino-US Strategic Economic Dialogue Joint Note' etc.
- 3) The diversity of the genres further contributes to the difference in the length of the stories, such as the short news items with less than 500 words and the long stories with more than 2,000 words.
- 4) The attitude in the six stories leans more to a neutral one. Usually, the commentary has a strong and apparent attitude that is negative, but many commentaries are byline articles, meaning that the opinion of the writer is personal and not official.

Comparison

In short, if a graph is used to describe the difference between the characters of the two newspapers, it could be like an axis. The vertical axis represents the *New York Times* and the horizontal axis represents the *People's Daily*, as is the figure shown below:



The vertical axis and the horizontal axis both refer to the time index. Time span is the most obvious difference between the vertical and horizontal axis. The vertical axis represents the continuity of time. For instance, the *New York Times* continuously presented a follow-up of the evolvement of the affair, mixing the news items with different genre and having diversity in length. On the contrary, the time in the horizontal axis relatively stabilizes at a certain point, or in a short period. That means the *People's Daily* prefers to use a big number of news items to emphasize the importance of an affair during a short period, in addition to diverse genres and different lengths of the stories.

Therefore, when it comes to the importance of an affair, the *New York Times* focuses more on the continuity of an event while the *People's Daily* focuses more on the use of more news items.

3.5 General Conclusion of the Findings

In summary, the traits related to the attitude of the two newspapers are displayed obviously by using the quantitative and qualitative methods, mixing with the case studies. The *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* are sharing some similarities in reporting each other's country while at the same time they also have big differences in how to report, what to report, etc.

The *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* had a similar number of articles that reflected each other's countries. However on comparison of the percentage of the number of selected articles against the number of articles on international coverage in the newspaper, the *People's Daily* is concerned more about U.S. affairs than the *New York Times* is, about Chinese affairs.

Both the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* prefer news reports in the business and political field. But when the *New York Times* casts more lights on the issue of China's society, the *People's Daily* on the other hand focuses more on the military issue of the United States. However, another distinct difference between the two newspapers in their topic is the attitude choice. 10 out of 13 news items in the topic of economy in the *New York Times* had a negative attitude while 3 out of 15 had a negative attitude in the *People's Daily*. Likewise, 6 out of 9 news items under the topic of politics in the *New York Times* had a negative attitude while the figure was 5 out of 12 in the *People's Daily*. It is only under the society topic in the *New York Times* that the three attitudes tend to reach a certain balance. And it is only under the military topic that the tough and negative attitude in the *People's Daily* becomes especially explicit. However, under the topic of business and politics, the neutral attitude in the *People's Daily* ranks highest when compared with the other two attitudes and other topics.

Both newspapers reported each other's countries' issues using reports of mostly fewer than 500 words. In this category, both newspapers have more than half news items with a negative attitude in the *New York Times* and close to half news items with a negative attitude in the *People's Daily*. But the *People's Daily* has more long-length news items than the *New York Times*. The interesting thing is that those long-length news items in both newspapers display less of the negative attitude. When it comes to the middle-length news items, the *New York Times* still displays a negative attitude while it is the neutral attitude that is dominant in the majority of such news items in the *People's Daily*.

Both newspapers use Hard News a lot to report each other's countries. Hard news is actually more prevalent in the *New York Times*, accounting for 33 out of 46 news items. And again, 26 out of 33 hard news stories in the *New York Times* are with a negative attitude while the number of news items with a negative attitude is equal to the one with a neutral attitude in the *People's Daily*. While the *New York Times* prefers to use the Feature genre more, the *People's Daily* on the other hand uses more of the Commentary genre.

In the findings by using the qualitative method, the writing model in the *New York Times* emphasizes problems, uses details and expands the whole picture from a smaller aspect while for the *People's Daily* its writing technique is direct record, general description and simplified disputes. Those writing models contribute to the presence of either the negative or the neutral attitude in the two newspapers respectively. Both of the two newspapers applied the borrowing technique in writing some special stories.

In the Same Theme and the Foreign Relations category, the *People's Daily* had more news items than the *New York Times* and that explains why the diversity of the news items from the content, the topic and the genre in the *People's Daily* is more abundant

than it is in the *New York Times*. This is probably because the *New York Times* still focuses on reflecting and exploring problems which in turn determine the domination of the negative attitude in these two categories.

The Own Character category reflects the writing style of the two newspapers i.e. the *New York Times* stresses the follow-up, the continuity of an affair while the *People's Daily* outlines the comprehensiveness of an affair.

It seems that the news stories about Chinese issues in the *New York Times* were dominated with a negative attitude in different categories. On the other hand, the allocation of the three attitudes in the *People's Daily* was almost equal in number.

Basing on this phenomenon, can one say that the *People's Daily* is more objective than the *New York Times*? Furthermore, other questions come up on presentation of the findings: why do these things happen in the two newspapers? What factors lead to these issues/problems?

Chapter 4: Theory

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on theories and concepts. The findings derived from using the qualitative and quantitative methods contributed to the choice of these theories and concepts which will further offer the theoretical support to explore the questions asked in the findings chapter. The definitions, the evolution and the relations among these theories and concepts will be introduced in detail in this chapter. Their pragmatic application will be expanded in the analysis chapter. Two main theories and one concept are involved, namely, the news value theory, the stereotype theory, and the concept of foreign policy. Furthermore, the concepts of objectivity, the relationship between objectivity and politics, economy and culture, bias and ethics which are all derived from the theory of news values will also be introduced. The Sino-US relationship will be mentioned briefly in relation to the concept of foreign policy.

Since this study aims at exploring how the *New York Times* reports on China and how the *People's Daily* reports on the U.S., to find out whether news values, especially objectivity, have been affected by diverse factors in international news consists of the most important task in this study. The specific factors that affect objectivity in the news reports could from politics, economy or culture, or foreign policy, individual stereotype and etc.

Therefore, the theory of news values and its relevant concepts will be regarded as a significant support in the analysis chapter, while the others i.e. the political, economic or cultural factor, the stereotype theory based on social psychological and the foreign policy concept, which is related to the social political theory, will be viewed as subsidiary supports in the analysis chapter.

4.2 News Values

Every day, we might experience different events; big ones or not so big, related or unrelated to us. While some of them can be news, others may not be. Obviously, not all events can be published. For instance, voting in a presidential election might belong to the former while your birthday gift sent by your mother probably belongs to the latter. It is only those events with special and unique values that can be treated as news. Therefore, those values are regarded as news values. Ahern (1984:221) indicates that both the intrinsic characteristics of an event as well as the extrinsic factors of an event are important in bringing about the selection of news.

The standard of news values varies in terms of the time i.e. past, now and future, the venue i.e. nation, geographic location, and person i.e. personal experience, knowledge, interests, etc. All those factors might affect the choice of news values which make the journalists and editors focus on some news values but downplay others. In his masterpiece book *Public Opinion* published in 1922, Walter Lippmann (1997:221) pointed out that news is an account of the overt phases that are interesting, and the pressure on the newspaper to adhere to this routine comes from many sides. Therefore, in the view of Lippmann, the interesting trait of an event is news value but this value might be affected by other factors, such as the availability of the material.

After Lippmann, scholars further devoted time to more specific and systemic researches about news values. In 1965, two Norwegian social scientists Johan Galtung and Mari Hombree Ruge created a system of prioritising news. They published a paper entitled “Structuring and Selecting News” in *Journal of International Peace Studies* (Brighton and Foy, 2007:1). In this paper, they concluded that: “events that were selected for coverage were those... that take place over a period of time, that fit in with the work schedule in a specific type of media, those that present minor uncertainty thus are more easy to interpret and are closer, and are more significance to the public’s culture (Galtung J. and Ruge M.H. 1965). Based on their hypothesis, they identified 12 news values that according to their observations where the most applied when the foreign editorial staff in their role as gatekeepers chose what to select and what to ignore in the news flow. The twelve news values are: conflict, relevance/proximity, timeless, simplification, personalization, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite persons, cultural specificity, and negativity (ibid).

Since Galtung and Ruge wrote, other media scholars have revised and have suggested amendments. Denis MacShane subdivided newsworthy events into the following categories: conflict, hardship and danger to the community, unusualness (oddity, novelty), scandal and individualism. Harcup and O’Neill’s (2001) study of the printed press resulted in their attempt to revise and update Galtung and Ruge. They identified these news values: power elite, celebrity, entertainment, surprise, bad news, good news, magnitude, relevance, follow-up and media agenda. Harrison (2000: 137), summarising previous authors’ conclusions lists a number of criteria by which news stories can be judged and listed: availability of pictures or film (for TV); short, dramatic occurrence, novelty value, grand scale, negative, unexpected, or expected, relevance/meaning, similar events already in the news, balanced programme, elite people/nations, personal or human interest framing. A Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press (1996) survey found that crime, the local community, and health were the news subjects that most interest the American public. Culture, and the arts,

news about famous people, and business and financial news were the least interesting of the 14 subjects tested (Hachten, 2005: xvii).

Although those scholars mentioned above define news value from their own research, their conclusions result in overlapping 'news values' for instance, the news value of 'conflict' in the view of Galtung, Ruge, and Denis MacShane; and 'relevance' in Galtung, Ruge and Harrison. Those scholars used different terms to express similar connotation of news values; for instance, the news value of 'simplification' in the study of Galtung and Ruge and the 'short' by Harrison; the 'celebrity' in the study of Harcup and O'Neill and the 'elite person' in Harrison, and Galtung and Ruge; the 'personality' for some scholars and 'individualism' for another. Surely, the evolution of news values is also reflected in the research of those scholars. Additionally, some news values complement the old ones, such as 'follow-up', the 'magnitude' or 'grand scale' etc.

Nevertheless, the question is that; do the standards that journalists use to report an event constitute the news values described by the scholars? Before those scholars induced news values from their data, news values had been formed in the minds of journalists and editors and had guided them in making decisions about the news worthiness of an event. In other words, do journalists consciously abide by some news values while reporting? Or, do they just report unconsciously with unset standards? Anderson and Ltule (1988:18) point out that there is no scientific formula for deciding what news is. At several points during the processes of news-gathering and writing, decisions to include or exclude information are made. Reporters and editors, consciously or unconsciously, often rely on time-honoured news elements to help them make decisions. The cynics conclude that "News is what a reporter/editor wants to write about" (Lindley 1993:31). Golding and Elliot (1996:633) indicate the derivation of news values from two immediate determinants: perceptions of the audience and availability of the material. Some scholars suggest that although we know about news values, seldom do journalists and editors use them in practice.

Another question involved is; will some news values be more frequently used than others in the case of international news reporting? At least, the negativity of news values is such a case in the reports of the *New York Times* as that has been deduced in the finding chapter. But, referring to the news values of Galtung and Ruge (because their criteria about news values was specially drawn up from the international news) as the criteria, will other news values, such as relevance/proximity, simplification, cultural specification, or expectedness still be kept as priority in the reporting or editing of both the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*?

However, a part from those various news values, one point is undoubted, and that is; news reports should be ‘accurate’ and ‘objective’ in order to be credible or believed (Hachten, 2005: xiv).

4.2.1 Objectivity

The rise of objectivity in journalistic methods is rooted in the scientific positivism of the 19th century. A number of communication scholars and historians agree that the idea of ‘objectivity’ has prevailed as a dominant discourse among journalists in the United States since the appearance of modern newspapers in the Jacksonian Era of the 1830s.⁴³ Hackett and Zhao (1998:18) argued that the popular commercial daily in the late 19th century developed the first version of journalistic objectivity. Michael Clow says: “It was public pressure which created the accommodation of ‘objectivity’ journalism almost a century ago (Hackett and Zhao, 1998: 235).

The origin of objectivity and its gradual emerging status are related closely with the development of the journalistic industry of the Western countries, especially the United States. One of the chief dogmas of the Western journalistic practice is the idea of objectivity in that; news reporting should seek impartiality and even handedness in its reporting (Harrison (2000), McQuail (2000) and Lichtenberg (2000)). Stevenson and Cole (1984:58) echoes that the professional criterion of objectivity i.e. of treating different sides of an issue more or less the same – is, on the whole, met by Western journalists.

Different aspects of ‘objectivity’ are emphasized in various definitions. Lee (1994:5) says that objective reporting is to “reproduce a vision of social reality which refuses to examine the basic structures of power and privilege” and “represent collusion with institutions whose legitimacy was in dispute”. In the journalistic discourse, objectivity can refer to fairness, disinterestedness, factuality, and non-partisanship, but most often encompasses all of these qualities.⁴⁴ More recently, a journalism professor and former reporter described objectivity as “the fuel that fires journalism’s engine, and ideal and ideology.” The former two definitions above outline the nature of objectivity while the later one stresses the function of objectivity for the journalists.

Hachten (2005: xiv) indicates that objectivity can be a standard, the one measuring the distance between fact and reporting. In some way, fact equates to the truth. In a news story, objectivity means free of a reporter’s feelings or opinions and based on

⁴³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(journalism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(journalism)) (Accessed on 2008-11-19)

⁴⁴ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(journalism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(journalism)) (Accessed on 2008-11-19)

verifiable facts. Lippmann (1997:226) echoes that news and truth is not the same thing. The function of news is to signalize an event; the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts. Therefore, “objective reporting” refers to a journalistic adherence to facts and an attempt to separate facts from value (Li, 1994:225). The responsibility for a journalist is to explore the fact and then to represent it on the basis of fact. However, the ability to discover the whole fact and to structure a news story is severely circumscribed by people’s intelligence, perspicacity, time and resources. In the western tradition, a number of practices have evolved to prove structural safeguards to the pursuit of truthfulness in the reporting of facts. They can be summarized as 1) the striving for accuracy and, 2) the search for objectivity, with the concomitant removal of bias through getting both sides of the story (Sanders, 2003:41).

On the opposition of truth is fiction. News reports during the Cultural Revolution of China in the 1970s were characterized as “jia (false), da (exaggerated), and kong (empty) (Li, 1994:231). Nowadays, it has become an ideological mirror reminding Chinese journalists to take a lesson. Fiction and truth are different, as Sanders (2003:42) says; however, they do both share one quality: they narrate the human experience of time. But in the journalistic field, there should be no place for the existence of fiction. Confronted with some special social problems related to religion and racial issues, objective balancing becomes more complex for journalists with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the goals of objectivity and the related practice of impartiality would go some way to eliminate reporting filtered by the more extreme kinds of religious, racial or other types of prejudice (Ibid).

4.2.2 The Relations between Objectivity and Politics, Economy and Culture

Objectivity does not exist in a vacuum. Maintaining the nature of objectivity from the factors of politics, business and cultural ideology is a long-term discussion among the journalistic professional and ethic field.

In the United States, an objective story is typically considered to be one that steers a middle path between two poles of political rhetoric. The tenets of objectivity are violated to the degree to which the story appears to favour one pole over the other.⁴⁵ Objectivity reporting arrived in China from the West at the end of the 19th century (Li, 1994:225). The relationship between the press and politics is mainly reflected in the relationship between the press and the partisan. Both American and Chinese press experienced such a period that the press completely depend on the partisan, from political support and as well as the financial support.

⁴⁵ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(journalism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(journalism)) (Accessed on 2008-11-19)

A variety of American newspapers in a city often had originated in political campaigns of earlier years. Some papers originally were highly partisan in content (Lindley, 1993:44). But after 1890, the independence from the advertising income made American newspapers become less partisan (ibid). In some field, American media outlets keep tight relationship with the authority. Voice of America, for example, is owned by the News Department of the United States which is a large U.S. government's "public relations firm" (Li and Liu, 1996:387).

The Chinese media was basically viewed as the tool of political propaganda. In China, Party control of the media is effectively implemented by a combination of what can be called the "Party Principle" of the media, which stipulates that all media have a responsibility to function as the mouthpiece of the party, but restrictions on media ownership, and a system of self-censorship that in recent years has incorporated gradually increasing degrees of editorial flexibility (Latham, 2007:35). This situation in which the media outlets lose a certain control of the party started only one decade ago when the same happened in the United States about one century ago. The new change obscures the pure political control between the press and the partisan melts the commercialized element into the management of the media outlet. As a result, there is always a compromise and a balance being sought between politically acceptable and popular media production (Latham, 2007:38).

However, some scholars argue that under the name of the independent entity, the American press cannot get rid of the trace of the partisan entirely. The press is still subject to the limitations of news resource from the government, political inclination in some special events, etc. This kind of authority interference in the objective coverage could be direct or indirect, visible or invisible. Partisanship, in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth, does violence to the best spirit of American journalism; in the news columns it is subversive of a fundamental principle of the profession (Michael Emery & Edwin Emery, 1992:301). Although the media reform has made more Chinese press independent in their economic revenue, the ownership of the press is still in the hand of the party. Therefore, in China, the Chinese style of reporting uses the appearance of objectivity while concealing underlying propagandistic motives (Li, 1994: 225-239).

After commercialization, the media outlets reduced the dependence on politics to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the commercial colour taking place of the previous politics permeates into the media outlets, from the ownership further into the content. Hachten (2005:69) points out that today's media mix presents a paradox. Marketing, advertising, propaganda and PR-driven messages are greater than ever.

The United States media tends towards centralized ownership which in turn leads to the centralization of different kinds of media in the hands of a few giant corporations.

Making profits takes over serious news content and becomes priority in some media outlets. One of the phenomena is that although, the newspaper is getting thicker and heavier, the increasing “weight” is not from the news content but from advertisements. For media analyst, Colin Sparks (1999:46), owner’s priorities are simply stated, ‘the press exist to make money, just as any other business does. Mowlana (1997:35) indicates that the economics of the media and the commercial nature of communication and the cultural industry in the United States creates constraints and puts limits on international and foreign affairs reporting.

Chinese media have been characterized as semi-commercialized by some scholars due to the fact that the ownership of the media is still under the party despite the fact that the most of the media outlets have to survive by themselves in regards to the financial aspect. As a result, the modern Chinese media are both commercial and political institutions. The pursuit of professionalism and objectivity enables journalists to dramatize the cultural and political meanings of their work, while downplaying their function as employees of profit-driven corporations (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:55). Chinese media is swaying between economic independence and political dependence. However, the significance of the former is getting much heavier today. Subsequently, Chen (2002:27) points out that the past political enthusiasm is not comparable to the current economic craze in China.

Sanders (2003:128) indicates that the economic realities of the media business can be one of the greatest obstacles to ethical journalism. Profits, audience share and advertising revenue, all drive journalism. Cultural ideology might be another kind of factor affecting objectivity in the news reporting. It could originate from national culture, the national tradition, and even national policies. Pickering (2001:80) claims that cultural properties are constitutive of who we are – they contribute to our growing identity and our sense of where we belong. Cultural ideology could also be derived from individual culture, effects from family and personal experience. The common points for these two categories of cultural ideology are that they are persistent and sometimes even ingrained. That also can be regarded as a kind of stereotype which will be introduced in detail in the latter part. In addition, cultural differences among countries are also viewed as the reason behind non-objective reports.

As a result, the real meaning of objectivity as well as its implementation is being questioned by a number of scholars and historians. Gerald Baldasty, have observed that ‘objectivity’ went hand in hand with the need to make profits in the newspaper business by selling advertising.⁴⁶ Hackett and Zhao (1998:54) proclaim that

⁴⁶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(journalism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(journalism)) (Accessed on 2008-11-19)

objectivity, to some, is a god and to others a devil. Some journalists embrace it and others damn it. Stevenson and Cole (1984:15) point out that the superficially “objective” news – that is, deliberately balanced, detached style devoid of interpretation, implication, and too often even coherence—of the Western media and agencies lends itself easily to this kind of conflict between content and expectation. As early as 1920, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz removed the veil of objectivity from the United States’ most prestigious paper, *The New York Times*. From its coverage of the Russian Revolution, they concluded that objectivity was “a case of seeing not what was, but what men wished to see”.

Consequently, the neutral standpoint extinct from commercialization and partisan is being stressed in reporting. Similar to objectivity, in the case of neutral reporting, journalists should not act as judges or educators in their reports. Neutral journalists occupied a special position in the warring countries, where they were treated with privilege and regarded with suspicion (Teel, 2006:197-198). In China between 1978 and 1988, neutral reporting gained popularity. Subsequently, it became basically indistinguishable from objective reporting (Li, 1994:233-234).

4.2.3 Bias

Bias is one of the behaviours lacking in objectivity. According to some, objectivity refers to the prevailing ideology of newsgathering and reporting that emphasizes eyewitness accounts of events, corroboration of facts with multiple sources and “balance”. Others hold the view that it means; “reporting things without bias.”⁴⁷ Earlier, bias was a synonym for partiality or partisanship which was opposed to the idea of “objectivity”, and often implied a deliberate effort to distort facts. More recently, bias also meant an “unconscious slant” and, according to conservatives, was introduced by the “prevailing liberal tendencies of the media” (Hachten, 2005:103).

Stevenson and Greene (1977) concluded that bias in the news from the readers’ and viewers’ perspective is information that conflicts with the picture of reality, which readers already have in their minds: bias exists when the news disagrees with what you think is true. Apparently people seldom consider that they could be “wrong”. However, if the coverage with inaccurate information and bias convey to its receiver—the reader, they will form the wrong or impartial opinion.

4.2.4 Ethics

The concepts of objectivity and bias presented above are related to the code of ethics. The former can be regarded as the result of ethical deliberation while the latter can be

⁴⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(journalism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(journalism)) (Accessed on 2008-11-19)

the one that lacks ethical concerns. However, implanting bias into a story consciously is one case but doing that unconsciously is another (Christian & Traber, 1997:12). Therefore, in reality, ethics is a judgment, 'bias' can only be avoided by using subjective thinking. Sanders (2003:15) indicates that ethical judgments focuses on standards of right and wrong, and discussion and controversy arise in the clash of different values or principles. It examines values such as courage, self-control and generosity; looking at them as conceptions of the good that function as criteria in making choices and judgments.

The requirements of ethical standards vary in different arenas. Ethics is highly demanded from the journalists in their reporting. As reporting is a subjective action, during this action, personal judgment might easily interrupt the conclusion of a news story during reporting (Christian & Traber, 1997:12). Therefore, journalists, as the eye witnesses of an event, have the strongest responsibility to repel the disturbance from the personal subjective judgment but rather objectively reflect the fact and tell the readers/viewers the truth. Professors John Merrill of Louisiana State University and Ralph D. Barney of Brigham Young University wrote that "Ethics is that branch of philosophy that helps journalists determine what is right to do in their journalism (Anderson and Lule, 1988:322). He further points out that ethics should provide the journalist certain basic principles or standards by which he can judge actions to be right or wrong, good or bad, responsible or irresponsible.

However, the disturbance facilitating in ethics not only comes from the journalists and editors, but also from other various social factors, ranging from the powerful party, government agency, social institutions, conglomerates, and sometimes, the persons who control the economic income of media outlets and thereby control the discourse.

In the 1970s, as the growing concern about media ethics and responsibility gathered steam in the United States in the 1970s, The Associated Press Managing Editors Association; the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Society of Professional Journalists and other two institutions related to journalistic field revised existing ethics codes. The American Society of Newspaper Editors Statement of Principles adopted this code of ethics in 1975. Two codes of ethics in the United States, the SPJ's code of ethics and the Los Angeles Times' code of ethics listed that journalistic activity should avoid political involvement so as to report the news independently.

However, as Merrill found out, "acting journalistically is the main thing; having a theory about journalism is another. Lindley (1993:30) echoes that sometimes a code of ethics developed by one of the national associations of editors or publishers is on the newsroom wall, but I've never known an editor, when faced with an ethical question, to consult such a guide. An editor already knows the traditions, many of

them ethical. Therefore, in practice, communication ethics should be closely connected to the universal human values, with basic ethical principal of human dignity, truth telling and nonviolence (Christian & Traber, 1997:12).

4.3 The Stereotype

The evaluation of the “stereotype” theory has extended from the original psychological field to social science and the communication industry. The term ‘stereotype’, coined in 1789 by the French printer Didot, originally referred to a printing process used to create reproductions (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981:3). Journalist Walter Lippmann (1922) later likened stereotype to “pictures in the head”, or mental reproduction of reality, and from there, the term gradually came to mean generalizations or about the members of a group (Plous, 2003:3-47).

Lippmann was the first to give a critical definition of stereotype in its modern sense in his book *Public Opinion* (Pickering, 2001:16). Lippmann defined stereotypes as ‘the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The renowned psychologist Gordon Allport in his study of prejudice defined stereotype as: “an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify our conduct in relation to category”. In the view of Lippmann, the phenomenon of stereotype originates from personalization while in Allport’s view; he outlines the result of stereotype which is the fact that has been exaggerated. Among the later scholars, some adhere to Lippmann’s theory while some stand by Allport’s. Schneider (2004:331) echoes Lippmann’s views as saying that stereotypes are often heavily conditional on a person, time, and place while Farmer (1990:248) backs Allport by saying that in most cases, stereotypes are merely exaggerated portrayals of real characteristics. He further indicates that “Getting beyond stereotypes to the real differences between cultures involves definition of issues, verification of facts, and careful qualification of assertions.”

4.3.1 The Characteristics and Outcomes

In his book *Public Opinion*, Lippmann defines the comprehensive origins of stereotypes not only merely from art, in the sense of painting and sculpture and literature, but from our moral codes and our social philosophies and our political agitations as well (Lippmann, 1997:57). During this process, the media outlets act as a conveying tool. Meanwhile, stereotype is not produced automatically. Schneider, (2004:150) indicates that a given stereotype will be relatively strong under some circumstances and at some times but not others. A child growing up in a community which has many African immigrants’ families might find it much easier to get along with African people. On the other hand, those who seldom have a chance to be in

close contact with Africans closely and in addition are affected by television or movie describing African violence, thus easily putting a bias towards African people.

Existing stereotype has some characteristics. The typical ones are persistence and indurations. That means that stereotypes sometimes last a long time and reject change. Stereotypes are never sleeping, always alert and potent (Schneider, 2004:150). And once activated, they can powerfully affect social perceptions and behaviour. The activation of stereotypes can also lead people to behave in ways consistent with the stereotype (Plous, 2003:23). As soon as stereotypes are learned either from the media, from family members, from direct experience, or elsewhere; they sometimes will take on a life of their own and become “self-perpetuating stereotypes” (Skrypnek & Snyder, 1980 in Plous 2003: 3-47). That is why, sometimes, we would rather keep our fixed opinion than accept a new one. Stereotype is like an invisible door preventing a novel idea from substituting the old one. Several studies have shown that when subjects are cognitively busy or have to make quick decisions, they tend to rely more on initial expectations and stereotypes than on actual behaviour in making their judgments (Weary, Jacobson, Edwards & Tobin, 2001: 206-219).

The characteristics of stereotypes are connected with individual ideology because the picture created from stereotypes is not based on facts. Rather, stereotyping creates the illusion of precision in defining and evaluating other people (Picking, 2001:4). Furthermore, stereotype usually prefers to be strengthened instead of being weakened. It is not a one-time effect. It can be reproduced on the primal impression being influenced by first-time stereotypes. Therefore, the evaluative ordering which stereotyping produces always occurs at a cost to those who are stereotyped, for they are then fixed into a marginal position or subordinate status and judged accordingly, regardless of the inaccuracies that are involved in the stereotypical description given of them (Fiske and Neuberg, in Plous).

However, on the other hand some studies release positive information considering the effect of the stereotype. It is said that stereotypes can be successfully reduced and social perceptions made more accurate when people are motivated to do so (Fiske and Neuberg in Plous). Moreover, one of the most effective ways this can be done is with empathy (Plous, 2003:3-47). When cognitive resources are available and people are motivated to form accurate impressions because of uncertainty, stereotype use is diminished (Weary, Jacobson, Edwards, & Tobin, 2001: 206-219). Studies reveal that stereotypes will not disappear automatically. Schneider (2004:412) suggests that there are two routes by which social influence might change stereotypes. One is via campaigns that focus on information and emotion. The second is through explicit or implicit social pressure. To reduce the influence of stereotypes, certain requirements

should be in place, such as; a combination of the instinct respect i.e. personal initiative and the extrinsic one i.e. the social pressure.

4.3.2 Stereotype in Communication

The term ‘stereotyping’ developed early from psychological studies. Gradually, it has been extensively deployed in media and cultural analysis across a broad analytical range (Pikering, 2001:9). From a certain aspect, stereotype is another kind of bias. But compared to the general meaning of bias, stereotype is more specific, and has systematically evolved into an independent school in different disciplines, including the communication field.

Pikering (2001: 22) points out that in the media, research stereotypes were manifest in the widely influential conception of communication as a linear process occurring between an active sender providing a powerful message and a passive receiver reacting dumbly to what was transmitted. But if the transmission of the information between the sender and the receiver takes place of problems, the media might distort the perceptions of groups (Scheider, 1987: 996-1002). Among the four categories of distortion by the media conducted by Scheider, stereotype is one of them. Stereotypic presentation of people may be portrayed stereotypically in terms of behaviours, values, and attitudes. Media portrayals of the mentally ill and psychiatrists tend to be both stereotypic and negative.

4.4 Foreign Policy

Along with the end of the cold war between the Eastern campaign and the Western campaign, the demand of the global economic integration and further political dialogue has been promoted to the agenda of worldwide nations. Mowlana (1997:30) says that international relations have been profoundly affected by economic factors including the globalization of the means of production and distribution by the transnational corporate structures. The enactment of the foreign policy becomes the important factor in improving political relations among nations. Mowlana further argues that the political-military involvements of the situation and the physical environment of the state were two important dimensions of foreign policy. The concepts of air defence, security, and sovereignty have been particularly newsworthy.

4.4.1 The Relations between Media and Foreign Policy

Media acts as a special role in the political foreign relations, from the complete governmental propaganda tool in the World War to the transmission tool, selectively conveying information. One of the major hypotheses in relations of the media to foreign policy is that in international conflict, the media often side with the perceived national interests of the system of which they are a part, making it difficult to

maintain journalistic independence and neutrality in the face of patriotism and national loyalty (Mowlana, 1997:35). Consequently, foreign news reports have been used to bolster policy positions on issues through the use of positive and negative examples (Hood, 1994: 35).

The early efforts, which continued from the founding of the United Nations after World War II until the mid-1960s, emphasized the importance of a free flow of information among nations and the use of mass media in the Third World to build “modern”—i.e. Western—societies to overcome poverty, illiteracy and the heritage of colonialism (Stevenson and Cole, 1984:5). For the case of the United States, Lee (1990:19) claims that the act of the media serving as a cultural and ideological arm of U.S. foreign policy is blatant. The government officials rely on journalists to convey news about their policies to broad public audiences so as to mobilize domestic support for their initiatives. Harding (1990:176) concluded three patterns implying the connections between the government and the media: officials may also seek to address foreign audiences through the press, by providing additional explanations of their policies on a background basis to selected journalists; officials depend on journalists as supplementary sources of information on international affairs; officials are willing to leak certain items of information (usually those that support government policy) to the press, but will not reveal others (especially those that undermine the logic of official policy). Therefore, Grosswiler (1997:38) concludes that the characteristics of the media in the foreign policy of the U.S. are as follows: first, the media are mostly supportive of U.S. foreign policy; second, editorial coverage of foreign policy reflects the views held by policy makers; and third, U.S. foreign policy goals have a significant impact on how foreign policy news is reported.

In the case of China, due to the fact that the media are all state-owned, some news items relevant to the government’s foreign policy publish in the party organ media outlets in a way implicit and indirect.

Other factors accounting for the nature of foreign policy and international affairs reporting include the problems of access and the government’s advantage in controlling the release of information. In addition to these, is the censorship in foreign countries, little time to write a fast-breaking story, inadequate research particularly of complicated issues, headline hunting and seeking to emphasize drama in order to get bigger headlines—all these are important structural factors that shape the pattern of foreign affairs reporting (Mowlana, 1997: 38).

4.4.2 The Relationship between China and US

The relationship between the United States and China experienced different phases. In the 1950s, at the height of the cold war, hostile attitudes were cast in the form of

anti-communism in the United States and other western countries (Farmer, 1990: 250). Before 1972, there was virtually no official contact between China and the United States, but the relatively high visibility of China in the news suggests its importance as a world power in American thinking. As Newsweek put it, “for more than two decades, China has been out of sight but rarely out of mind” (Chang, 1990:200). In 1972, the U.S. President Nixon’s visit to Beijing not only represented a dramatic shift of U.S.’s China policy, but also opened China’s door to American news media. The United States recognized Beijing in 1979 as the sole representative of China and the Chinese people, officially ending the long hostilities and isolation between the two countries (Chang, 1990:181). After President Nixon broke the ice in 1972, Sino-American relations developed in a very deliberate fashion. However, problems of the second Nixon administration-- the Watergate Affair, which led ultimately to Nixon’s resignation from office-- made it impossible for the United States to implement full diplomatic recognition of the China (Farmer, 1990:250). U.S. relations with China became further established in 1984 when President Reagan visited Beijing (Chang, 1990:181). Subsequently, after an absence of nearly three decades, American news media were finally backed on the Chinese scene.

The Sino-US relationship varies due to complicated factors, such as the mature degree of international circumstances, the nature of the domestic policy in both countries. American foreign policy depends on three momentums: ideology, security and economy separately (Li and Liu, 1996:10). Therefore, its relationship with China fluctuates according to these momentums. In the 1970s and 1980s, China was regarded as an ally of the United States. Judging from its security aspect, America needed China to fight against the Soviet Union. In the opinion of Japan, from August 27, 1996 “To Explain Current Affairs” the reason for the “honeymoon” time between the United States and China is the existence of their common enemy, the Soviet Union. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, China took the place of the former Soviet Union (Li and Liu, 1996:347). This situation persisted a rather long time and during the tensest period, high-level Chinese leaders did not visit Washington for eight years while America’s president and vice president did not visit Beijing for seven years. As a direct result of this stand off the “Japan-US security military alliance” was created (Li and Liu, 1996:38).

Nowadays, the mutual economic benefit of both the US and China binds them closely together. China is listed as the fourth-largest exporting country to the United States and is already the second-largest U.S. trading partner. Only in the first 8 months of 2008, the bilateral trade of the two nations has reached \$ 26.7 billion.⁴⁸ And that in

⁴⁸ <http://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/news/2008/11-18/1454309.shtml> (Accessed on 2008-12-4)

turn has urged them to temporarily abandon the divergence within their political sphere.

4.5 Conclusion

Although the above theories and concepts are presented separately, they associate with each other from a certain perspective. News values play a role in selecting events, which have the potential to become a news story. In the process of exploring and covering news stories, journalistic ethics require journalists to evaluate events with regard to their news values. In other words, journalists should present news stories objectively, which requires that journalists avoid evaluating stories from a personal bias ensuring that accurate and balanced information are conveyed to readers. However, the factors interrupting the balanced and accurate coverage are various, ranging from the reporters' knowledge, their ideology, and their cultural background up to the government policy, national security and etc. Stereotype is a special paradigm among various biases. Its influence sometimes lasts much longer than the normal bias and is harder to modify. It becomes even worse when one stereotype strengthens another one.

Thus, objectivity is the crucial core intersecting those theories and concepts, especially when it comes to the issue of news reporting. News values require objectivity and journalistic ethics guarantee objectivity. On the other hand, the foreign policy of a nation, stereotype and biases might interrupt the implementation of objectivity.

International news is different from local news. Usually, the latter is more attractive to readers due to the geographical relevance between them. But whether that means that international news have to outline some special news values in an effort to attract local readers, such as the values of conflict, negativity. Furthermore, will the disadvantage of geographical isolation further result in the simplification of international news, both from the quantity and quality of the content? Lastly, will the trait that China is an old cultural country contribute to cultural specification for the *New York Times* in reporting about Chinese issues? Consequently, might those hypotheses explain the problems in the international news report of the two newspapers that have been presented in the findings chapter?

Chapter 5: Analysis Chapter

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the findings chapter is to answer the research questions about “what” and “how”. What did the *New York Times* report about China and what did the *People’s Daily* report about the United States? How did they report it? Therefore the aim of this chapter is to answer these questions about “why”: why were most news items in the *New York Times* dominated by the negative attitude? Secondly, why is it, that the neutral attitude was prominent in the *People’s Daily*? And are there any other reasons affecting objective reports in international news? Those theories and concepts that presented in the last chapter will be practically applied in this chapter to provide a reasonable interpretation.

These scenarios presented in the *New York Times* and the *People’s Daily* was argued by Stevenson and Gaddy (1984:88). They argued that on one hand, coverage should be balanced; while on the other hand, coverage should accurately reflect some objective reality. The former reflects the situation of the *New York Times* which lacks equal coverage in the allocation of the three attitudes in its reports, i.e. the sum of news items with the negative attitude overwhelmingly outweighs the sum of other news items with either the positive or the neutral attitude. The latter phenomenon explains the situation of the *People’s Daily*, i.e. the content of its news items are not completely evaluated from the comprehensive perspective and thus, they increase the proportion of the neutral attitude in the reports.

Under the surface of the unbalanced allocation of the three attitudes and the incomplete presentation is the core related to the principle of objectivity in news reporting. Hackett and Zhao (1998: 8-9) indicate that objectivity calls upon journalists to follow certain criteria, such as factualness, accuracy, and completeness, or fullness of account. Both of these two newspapers are one of the most prestigious in their own countries. And the reputation of the *New York Times* has been recognized internationally. Unquestionably, the two newspapers have spared no efforts to ensure justice and balance in their coverage. However, problems related to objectivity still appeared in both newspapers.

The reasons for lack of objectivity are multi-facets. They might originate from political or economic factors, from the cultural difference between the Western and the Eastern, or from the nation’s institutional side, the impact of stereotype and so on. Will Irwin (in Teel, 2006:42) reasons that publishers’ commercial and political considerations had corrupted journalism by dictating news and editorial decisions. For

the case of the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*, they have similar reasons but at the same time, their own separate and specific reasons as well.

5.2 Why Were the News Items in the NYT Dominated by the Negative Attitude?

As calculated and presented in the findings chapter, 31 out of 46 news items about China in the *New York Times* had a negative attitude, accounting for 67% of the sum of news items. Secondly, in the top three topics of having the most news items, despite the topic of Society, other two topics, the Economy and the Politics were greatly dominated by the negative attitude in terms of the specific proportions of 77% and 67% respectively. Even though the proportion of the negative attitude in the topic of Society is not as big as it is in the Economy and Politics topic, it still ranks top for having the most news items compared to the other two attitudes.

Moreover, this phenomenon is not a single case. That happens in the category of genre as well. As the group with the most number of news stories, the hard news category has a high number of news items with a negative attitude, amounting to 79%.

All those figures demonstrate that the negative attitude in the *New York Times* accounts for more than half, amounting close to 80% in some categories. As a result, the news items with the neutral and positive attitude are very few in the *New York Times*. Ahern (1984:221) indicates that the intrinsic characteristics and extrinsic factors are both important in bringing about the selection of news. Intrinsic characteristics here can be understood as the factors that are relevant to the content of news reporting, such as the news values. The extrinsic factors, using Ahern's words, can be classified under the heading of gatekeeper socialization, media constraints and event context. Specific to this study, the reasons that contributed to the domination of the news items with a negative attitude in the *New York Times* combine the intrinsic nature i.e. the criteria of news values with the extrinsic factors i.e. the commercial, the political powers and stereotype.

5.2.1 The Intrinsic Factors

Originating from the West, and later referenced by the Eastern countries, the criteria of news values nowadays are not very different among countries in the world. But the intrinsic factors of newsworthiness are unique to each event and pertain directly to what happened, how and when (Ahern, 1984:221). In addition, the concrete choice of the news value is different from country to country, newspaper and personal writing habit. The difference of choosing news values among countries might be proved from the news stories pertaining to the Same Theme presented in the findings chapter.

When the event of the China—U.S. Talk was subjective to the news value of elite country, elite people, timeless and relevance/proximity, the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times* both issued this story. But on the other hand, each of these two newspapers published the event from different perspectives. The *New York Times* emphasized the divergences between the two countries while the *People's Daily* dwelt more on the results achieved by the two sides. Consequently, when the *People's Daily* took the positive or neutral attitude, the *New York Times* selected the news value of negativity. In another group The China's Military Assessment of the Same Theme, the *New York Times* maintained a negative attitude in its story. Thus, although the criteria of the news values are the same, the two newspaper's selection in practice is different and in most cases, the *New York Times* takes negativity as priority of the news value.

In fact, the inclination towards negativity started quite early in the United States and its trace is very obvious in the evolution of American journalism. Hachten (2005:111) discovers that the press (of the United States) nearly always magnifies the bad and underplays the good. Since the 1960s, reporters have served Americans a steady diet of trends and events of such a fundamentally negative nature. Won (1989:101) echoes that carrying criticism has been a fine tradition of the newspaper. According to this classical 'western' definition almost all news events involve an unusual change from normal routines or expected conditions, which is most often perceived as negative or uncomfortable.

Secondly, the selection of news values by journalists also takes into consideration the appetite of the local readers. A Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (1996) survey found that crime, the local community, and health were the news subjects that most interest the American public (Hachten, 2005: xvii). Therefore there is no wonder why the *New York Times* paid so much attention to one event related to the toxic toothpaste produced from China. It published 8 pieces of news items during 15 days while the *People's Daily* published only 3 pieces related to the same event. The motivation of catering for the taste of the reader prompted the *New York Times* to closely follow the development of the event, from the moment that the toxic toothpaste was found in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, two Central American countries, to the latest dynamic that the toxic toothpaste was found in the United States' market and later, to the point when the Chinese authorities had to devise rules on food and drug safety. Furthermore, all those eight news items share one common news value: negativity. Here, when those news items combine news values of negativity with the most interest of the local readers, they gain the priority to be published in the newspaper. .

Thirdly, the trait of international news reports contributes another reason for choosing the news value of negativity. There is considerable support for the argument that

national media editors often overselect bad news, although the pattern varies widely. In general, editors use a higher proportion of political bad news than the agencies supply, and the overselection is often greatest in Third World coverage (Stevenson and Gaddy, 1984:94). As in many of the arguments in the world information order debate, a detailed and influential statement of the Third World indictment is Masmoudi's statement to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Stevenson and Cole, 1984:8):

They often present these communities—when indeed they show interest in them—in the most unfavourable light, stressing crises, strikes, street demonstrations, putsches, etc., or even holding them up to ridicule.

As a representative of the Third World community, China was presented more negatively in the *New York Times*. Furthermore, the negativity in the reporting was not limited to a few of topics or genres, but rather, it randomly penetrated most of the reports in the newspaper.

As a result, the professional habit of negative inclination of the American journalists, the interest from the press reader, and the particular trait of international reports strengthen the frequent application of the news value of negativity. Apart from that, reporting news will be disturbed by the social economic competition, the political climates and ideological stereotype. All those could be regarded as the extrinsic factors that influence objectivity in news reporting.

5.2.2 The Extrinsic Factors

The combination of the commercialization of the American media system and foreign news increase the chances of the negative attitude in the *New York Times*. After the transformation from the partisan press to the commercial press, the benefit dooms the fate of media outlets. Many of the newspaper industry's characteristics is profit orientation, the commercial need to attract audiences whose attention is sold to advertisers prevails in the press (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:63-64). Although the subscription or the circulation of the day's newspaper is not the main resource of the profit any more, the readership is still a significant index for the newspaper. That is because the readers are the potential customers of the advertising published in the newspaper. Therefore, Sanders (2003:129) indicated that content (of the news story) became the 'bait' to catch readers and viewers for advertisers and audience figures the key to evaluating success. Catering for the appetite of the readers and therefore earning commercial benefit becomes the priority for many newsrooms in picking up reports, sometimes even over the standard of the news values. However, compared to local news and national news, for many Americans, foreign news does not seem important (Hachten, 2005:123). After all, either from geographical location or from

the psychological affection, foreign countries lack relevance or proximity to the local people. Lippmann (1997:224) reveals that the ability to rest in the negative implies either a lack of interest in the result, or a vivid sense of competing alternatives. The case of the American press fits more in the latter scenario.

Additionally, the characteristic of simplification of foreign news in the *New York Times* increases the chance of negativity. The fact that foreign news is not so welcome by the American readers directly affects the space of foreign issues in a newspaper. The most apparent phenomenon of the simplification in the newspaper is the length of the news stories. As shown in the findings chapter, more than half of the news items in the *New York Times* were under 500 words and the stories under 1,000 words accounted for 80 percent of the total number of news items. Since short length limits the expansion of a story to include detail with the background and more context introduction, the journalist cannot interpret the story from comprehensive aspects and be able to draw conclusions directly. Consequently, 70% of news items with less than 500 words in the *New York Times* tend to lean towards the negative attitude. The figure drops to 60% in the group of the news items from 1,000 to 1,500 words. In contrast, there were two news items with more than 1,500 words, which both had a neutral attitude. Such situation is similar in the *People's Daily*. That in turn implies that the longer the story, the higher the chances are that it will not have a negative attitude.

Moreover, another type of writing model of the *New York Times* also offers an opportunity for the presence of the negative attitude. As concluded in the findings, journalists prefer “emphasizing problems, using detailed description and expanding the whole event starting from the smaller aspects then moving on to the bigger picture”. The trait of “emphasizing problems” implies that the journalists in the *New York Times* are used to presenting negative information.

Apart from those, the political factor exerts a certain influence on negative reporting in the *New York Times*. Although the press in the United States is an independent entity, the owners of the media must maintain support of the status quo based on their “extensive social and business connections to other business and government leaders (Herman, 1993:23-45). That means that the independence of the press from political influence is not absolute but the dependence of the newspaper on the U.S. authority, either from the information resource or the mutual support is inevitable. This subtle relationship between the media and the government becomes more obvious when it comes to foreign issues. This will be talked about more in detail in a later section related to the foreign policy.

5.2.3 Stereotype Influence

Furthermore, negative attitude by the journalists of the *New York Times* on Chinese issues is related to a traditional stereotype. Sino-US relations that are developing from completely hostile to normal diplomatic relations and then the current trade contravallation have stereotyped the writing model of the American journalists while reporting about China.

In the 50s of the last century, the extreme opposition between the Western camp and the Easter camp plunged the Western into the 'anti-communism' status. "Communism" represented the "ultimate evil" by the authority of the western nations. At that time, the Chinese and Cuban revolutions had been "traumas" to Western elites (Grosswiler, 1997:196) and no positive information but only completely and absolutely opposite attitude about them were transmitted to the public. China was viewed as the second biggest communism country followed by the former Soviet Russia in the world; hostile attitude was cast from America to China (Farmer, 1990:250). Although the Cold War symbolized that the collapse of the Eastern camp was over, the ideology of the cold war sustained somewhat. On one hand, the United States carried out the measure of the embargo to Communist countries in an effort to discourage Soviet expansion in the Western Hemisphere (Fitzgerald, 1994:4-5); on the other hand, the Cold War ideology may have a great impact on U.S. media coverage of surviving communist and socialist countries, most of which are in the Third World (Grosswiler, 1997:195).

In 1972, the United States' President Nixon's visit to Beijing opened China's door to American news media and thereby officially ending the long hostilities and isolation between the two countries (Chang, 1990:181). From 1971 until late 1973 or 1974, as progress was made, many Americans tended to assume that a new era had dawned and to confuse the easing of Sino-American hostility with the forging of a cooperative relationship. But there is an air of scepticism of the United States to China (Barns, 1977:1). The Sino-US relationship entered another "cold period".

Although the political climate between the U.S. and China at that time was in the winter, the warm currency of the economic communication of the two nations flowed smoothly. According to U.S. statistics, bilateral trade in 1979 amounted to \$2, 37 billion, and in 1996 reached \$63, 5 billion. China had risen to the fifth biggest partner of the U.S. in 1995 from the 24th in 1980.⁴⁹ The trade deficit of the U.S. to China began in 1983 and dramatically boosted to \$39, 5 billion. The imbalanced trade between the two nations partly resulted in the appearance of the "China Threat

⁴⁹ <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/ziliao/wzzt/2296/t10524.htm> (Accessed on 2008-12-22)

Theory” in the United States. Michel Oksenberg, Stanford Professor of Political Science, is a pioneer figure producing the “China Threat Theory” who proposes two opinions about China. One is China is getting more and more important and another is China is a big enemy of America in the future (Li and Liu, 1996:342). The coverage of this theory in the media further ignited the rage of normal Americans who believed that it was China that took away their working opportunities and formed a new threaten against the U.S.

Moving to the 90s, the relationship between the two nations combined with friction. Liu Kang, a professor in the U.S., proved that in the 90s, the anti-China opinions were surrounded by human rights, China Threat Theory, Sino--U.S. trade and the Taiwan issue (Li and Liu, 1996:403).

As a result, the impression by Americans of China in five decades changed from original hostility, to scepticism, and then to a kind of worry of the “China Threat”. Farmer (1990:248) suggests that these kinds of stereotypes about China that gained currency in American minds grew out of the differences in their histories. Studies of the perception of China by Americans have noted not just the tendency of a natural function of cultural distance to stereotyping, but also a shifting currency of the images from more or less benign to more or less threatening, a function of changing political conditions, solidifying the stereotype of Americans about China.

George Herbert Walker Bush, the previous U.S. President, said in an interview in *China Daily*: “I think this is not a problem, today’s Chinese people have more freedom than before. But now some American people still do not understand.”⁵⁰ Former British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott urged the Western society to avoid using “the tone during the Cold War” when dealing with Chinese issues.⁵¹

One fact that should not be neglected is that stereotypes are easy to create but hard to delete. Even if people understood fully how they acquire stereotypes, they might not have much of a leg up on changing them (Schneider, 2004:379). Though the “open-door policy” carried out in the late 1970s offered a glance of chance for the western journalists to enter China and see China in their own opinion, the 1989 Tiananmen event broke this chance and pushed the impression of China in the eyes of Western journalists to the bottom again. This general negative impact in the past on China in turn expanded the reflection of today’s China in the American media, characterized with suspicion, denial as well as negativity in the Western press. Therefore, news

⁵⁰ <http://news.wenxuecity.com/messages/200812/news-gb2312-759685.html> (Accessed on 2008-12-21)

⁵¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_7240000/newsid_7249800/7249835.stm (Accessed on 2008-02-18)

stories about Chinese riots, its manic market, uncertain stock, toxic toothpaste, the quake etc. were negatively presented in *the New York Times* and these accounted for 67 percent and in turn left 22 percent of the news items with the neutral attitude and only 11 percent with the positive attitude.

But the changes in China during the recent three decades are dramatic and unprecedented, permeating into almost every layer of the whole society. However, characters of stereotype connect with certain issues such as race, religion and the third world countries (Rivenbrugh, 1997:82). Consequently, those stories are seldom published by the media about how China is trying its best to solve the problem of adequate food and clothing for its 1.3 billion populations which avoid the food burden on the world. Neither do they write about the distilments of the Chinese cultural philosophy in anti-hegemony and chasing harmonious society or about how the level of the state censorship and their interference on the media has transferred from complete and direct control to a gradual situational control. Furthermore, even the democratic progresses in China's political system are seldom reported on. Compared with the democratic degree of many western countries, China's democracy still has a long journey to make but the current progress is a big step for China and the Chinese people and is capable of building up a good democratic environment for the future of China.

Only five articles in the *New York Times* had a positive attitude, thus accounting for a percentage of 11. Three of them were related to a social issue, one to the military and one to the economy. None of the stories with a positive attitude talked about Chinese political issues during the entire research period of 15 days. And two of these five articles were very brief opinions under 500 words. Three other articles were hard news and they were not very long, i.e. usually under 1,000 words. The situation of news items with the neutral attitude in the *New York Times* was not any better. 10 stories were involved in this group and 5 of them were related to social issues. Only two were related to political and economic issues respectively. Compared with the 67 % negative attitude, the sum of the news stories with both the neutral and positive attitude is just half of the negative attitude.

Therefore, the stereotypes that produced relations between China and the United States in decades also act to promote negativity in the coverage of the *New York Times*. Lippmann viewed stereotypes as inadequate and biased, as endorsing the interests of those who use them, as obstacles to rational assessment, and as resistant to social change (Pickering, 2001:18). Therefore, Lippmann (1997:63) concluded that a pattern of stereotypes is not neutral.

Those factors related to news values, commercial benefit, stereotypes, to a certain extent, result in the prevalence of the negative attitude in the *New York Times*. And

that relatively lessens the proportion of the news stories with neutral and positive attitudes. All those factors also lead the news items about Chinese issues in the *New York Times* towards a conscious or unconscious extreme: dominated by the negative attitude. This unbalanced allocation of the three attitudes in the *New York Times* is one kind of abnormal behaviour of objectivity, because that would lead the reader of the newspaper to receive the ui-polar information and thereby making it difficult for the reader to form a correct and objective impression of other countries.

5.3 Why Was the Neutral Attitude Prominent in the *People's Daily*?

Compared with its counterpart the *New York Times*, the *People's Daily* seems more conscious in keeping the balance in the allocation of the three attitudes in terms of its 38 percent negative attitude against 67 percent in the *New York Times*. Although the positive attitude still ranked the bottom in the *People's Daily* as it did in the *New York Times*, the difference among the three attitudes is as small as 4 pieces of news items.

Those news items with positive attitude are also called 'good news' in some literature. Negativity lists one of the important news values; but 'goodness' is never regarded as one of them. However, the influence engendered from good news to the reader and to the society is unmeasured treasure. Since the Western media focus too much on the negativity effect of the news, Stevenson and Cole (1984:9) argue that it is the "good news" from the Third World that tells the rest of the world not about disasters, coups, poverty, and violence, but about the victories over disease and poverty, about successes in piecing together nationhood from diverse culture. Negative news probably attracts readers at the first glance with those sensational words and pictures but on the other hand, good news disseminates more positive information and thereby ignites people's hopes. Thus, under the proportions 26 percent positive attitude versus 11 percent in the *New York Times*, the *People's Daily* seems more objective than the *New York Times* in the allocation of the three attitudes.

Another obvious characteristic of the *People's Daily* different from that in the *New York Times* is the proportion of the news items with the neutral attitude equalling the proportion of news items with the negative attitude which is 37 percent. In the context of journalism, objectivity is understood as synonymous with neutrality.⁵²

Altogether, it seems that the above description leads to a conclusion: the *People's Daily* is more objective than the *New York Times*. Li (1994:235) indicates that in the United States, where journalists strenuously attempt to abide by the principles of objectivity, research reveals that they still exhibit biases when covering issues such as

⁵² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_\(journalism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_(journalism)) (Accessed on 2008-10-10)

race relations and politics in developing countries. However, the definition of objectivity can change from case to case in terms of varied situations. Although China has seen considerable theoretical argument over Western principles of news objectivity, issues remain regarding how objective reportage relates to the media's political stance and journalists social responsibility. While the *New York Times* failed in the objective allocation of the number of the three attitudes, the problem of the *People's Daily* is related to content of the news items.

Both the journalism industry of the United States and that of China admit that "there is no such thing as completely objective reporting" but the understanding of this sentence and the operation in practice are different between the two nations. In the West, the personal subjective behaviour of the journalists and editors are considered the main factors that affect objectivity in news reporting. In China, the political system determines the function of the media outlets. Mao Zedong, the founder of the new China once claimed that media are one of the implement organizations of the state-party. Therefore, from the beginning of the establishment of the new China in 1949, the media are regarded as the tool of the state-party (Li, 1994:228). Consequently, in China, objective reporting is not a problem of method or style, but rather is related to the media system and function (Li, 1994:235).

Hackett and Zhao (1998:84) argue that objectivity is not an absolute and unchanging standard, but is always relative to its cultural and political context. This appropriately summarizes the problems of the *People's Daily*. Behind the neutral attitude is the issue of avoidance of evaluation of the content of the news items.

5.3.1 Political Reasons

First, the ownership of the press in China means that the newspapers seldom publish its apparent standpoint, especially those newspapers regarded as party organs, like the *People's Daily*. The current political system of China looms the track of the two-thousand-year centralized feudal system. The difference is that the control of power has transferred from the emperor in the feudal era to the Communist party of today. Fairbank (1990) says that China's modern media have grown up and operate today in the shadow of China's long heritage of the autocracy of the central government. The Communist party declares its role of representing the people and serving the people. In contrast with the Western independent newspaper whose commercial benefit is its priority, the political identity is the priority of the Chinese newspaper. The party-state controls newspapers and newspapers function as the mouthpiece of the party-state. Thus, Friedman (1994:130) indicates that political reality lies beyond the printed words.

On the one hand, the media is responsible for conveying information from the party to the public. The party publishes its principle, new law and instruction through the media. Therefore, Chinese media are characterized as 'commandism' which means, the media arm of the regime was formed into a centralized command system, designed to give the Communist Party and its apparatus control over the media (Pletz, Jakubowicz & Novosel, 1995:23). Under such conditions, the standpoint of a party organ, like the *People's Daily*, represents the standpoint of the party-state. Subsequently, newspapers become rather cautious in presenting an explicit attitude, especially when it comes to a sensitive topic or the issues related to the foreign diplomacy. That partly contributes to 37 percent of the news items with the neutral attitude in the *People's Daily* versus 22 percent in the *New York Times*. Consequently, while the 6 out of 9 news items of the politics topic in the *New York Times* are with a negative attitude, the *People's Daily* has 6 out of 12 news items under the same topic with a neutral attitude. The same phenomenon happens under the business topic in the *People's Daily* in that nearly half of the news items are have a neutral attitude.

In the United States the press prides itself in its relative independence from government and other sectors of society and reporters are generally expected to report the facts as they see them. In China it is otherwise. There the press is viewed as an agency of the government with the task not just to inform, but also to indoctrinate. The result is a predominance of good news and often the obscuring of bad news (Farmer, 1990:249). Criticism in the *People's Daily* is required to be restricted to 20% of the coverage, with 80% devoted to propagating the achievements (Polumbaum, 1990:43, Lee, 1990:8). By doing that, propaganda officials exhorted to boost people's confidence and foster "stability and unity" and thereby build up the positive image of the party in the mind of the Chinese people (Ibid). Therefore, to present more positive information to the public in the newspapers provide another reason for the domination of the neutral attitude in the *People's Daily*.

However, this norm is usually abided by the coverage of the domestic issues. On the basis of chasing the general situation of "stability and unity", foreign news are usually presented with an "objective" picture so as to avoid the diplomatic unpleasant or conflict with other countries. On the other hand, since the economic reform started, the most fundamental task for the Chinese authority has been the problem of development: how best to organize the national community in order to undertake economic growth (Iriye, 1977:12). Thus the political divergence gives way to economic development. That means that the authority's effort to avoid that economic cooperation becomes a victim of political debate. Therefore, to ensure a smooth foreign relationship, the *People's Daily* has to carefully evade harsh words, controversial issues as well as direct support or an oppositional standpoint.

5.3.2 Cultural Reasons

The cultural tradition and writing pattern of China provides another reason for the domination of the neutral attitude in the *People's Daily*. As early as the feudal society of a thousand years ago in China, personal loyalty to his emperor was as strict a duty as being filial to his father. From a certain extent, this tradition is inherited by the precedent generations until today. A moral premise is the paramount importance of people's loyalty to their ruler. Resisting authority is regarded as a big mistake related to personal morality, and it was feared, that it might lead to social "chaos". The attitude of obedience to authority has been internalized in the patriots' minds. As a result, obedience and confirmation of the fixed ideological model accustoms the normal people to not questioning authority.

This ideology originates from Confucius, the most famous Chinese philosopher in history. Confucianism dominated Chinese political ideology and provided archetypal images for Chinese communication behavior for over two thousand years (Lu, 2002: 3). Although the level of the Confucianism influence in the political system were different from that era, some cores of Confucianism philosophy are kept till today. One of them is to build up a harmonious society and the concept of harmony was identified with the concept of order (Rita, 2002: 34-35). Behind this harmony is the acceptance of authority and hierarchy and the importance of relationships, sacrificing the personal benefit (or small family's benefit) in an effort to benefit the collective or the society ("big family") profit. This ideology contributes to the ground of the party to control the public opinion to a certain extent.

The old Chinese cultural system repelled any stuff stamped with foreign label. That was viewed as a kind of betrayal to the native culture. However, foreign culture was still piercing into China gradually through the initial commercial transactions. Subsequently, for 150 years the Chinese have been struggling to gain aspects of "foreign culture" while preserving their own "culture" (Pye, 1977:146). Pye further points out that once the issue was between Western culture and Confucian values; now it is between a world culture of modernity and Maoist values. Furthermore, this trend develops to the world culture integration and the party values. But this shift does not change the one-way flow of the information in China which is that the newspaper publishes the information in terms of instructions from the party-state; while the public passively receive the information from the newspaper. Hackett and Zhao (1998:143) describe the news media in China as relying on bureaucratic organizations for the definition of "events". That implies that institutions transform complex happenings into procedurally defined "cases", which provide the criteria of relevance, the conceptual categories, and the mechanisms of time-demarcation that define "events" for the media (ibid). Though after the open-door policy launched in the late of the 1970s, most of the Chinese media did not attain subsidies from the authority

any more but transformed to the independent entities economically. The *People's Daily* is an exception which still receives subsidies from the government and is directed by the government.

The writing techniques in the *People's Daily* are another reason contributing to the dominance of the neutral attitude. Li (1994:226) indicates that the historical records style is the dominant mode of Chinese newspaper reporting. Derived from Confucius, the Spring and Autumn writing style is the main technique applied by the writer in China. The Spring and Autumn characterizes that the writer neither explicitly expressed his own emotions toward his subject nor clearly reveals his own judgment of the truth or falsehood of events (Li, 1994:225). This further explains why journalists of the *People's Daily* hardly evaluate information or express their apparent standpoint; but rather maintains a conservative neutral attitude. Chinese rhetoric is implicit and embedded in the works of Chinese philosophy, religion, and historical and literary texts (Lu, 2002:6). Subsequently, current Chinese communication studies are mostly informative and descriptive, aimed at confirming and legitimizing traditional Chinese values and practices (ibid).

The dual impact from the political and cultural factors might interpret why the writing characteristics of the *People's Daily* are 'direct record, general description and simplified dispute or problems' as concluded in the findings chapter. That guarantees that the content of news items lack explicit standpoints. Therefore, when the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* simultaneously reported news about the China-US Talk, the former emphasized the disputes between the two countries while the latter stressed more achievements and only simplified these disputes by mentioning them in one sentence.

But under some environment, the journalists and the editors of the *People's Daily* present their opinion through a kind of indirect method which is metaphorically referred as "hitting line balls" (chabianqiu) and innuendo (hanshasheyang) (Friedman, 1994:129 & Lee, 1994:3-29). "Hitting line balls" (chabianqiu) implies the news story which is at the edge of violating the rule of the government but actually still keeps within the scope of legislation. Innuendo (hanshasheyang) in the news story means that instead of the literal meaning, there is the subtext behind the literal meaning. For instance, when the *New York Times* continuously reported the issues about the toxic toothpaste produced in China, the *People's Daily* issued an article about the food recall system in the United States functioning as a kind of fight back. This article was a letter to the editor which means instead of the editor or journalist from the newspaper, it was a reader who was interested in this question. Secondly, the key point for the *People's Daily* to publish this article aimed at relieving the domestic panic caused by the negative report about the toxic toothpaste. The subtext means that

America also has a quality problem of its products. Thus, it has the recall system to recall the problematic. Thus, the quality problem of the product does not happen only in China but also in the United States.

A similar example is the “borrowing” writing technique in the *People’s Daily*. The newspaper borrowed the attitude and standpoint from another country to express its opinion. This technique is used especially for the criticism reports. For instance, when the President of the U.S. signed the emergent war appropriation bill, the Cube’s president’s attitude which criticized the U.S. increasing the war fear was borrowed by the *People’s Daily* to express its same opinion. Subsequently, by using those writing techniques, a native Chinese reader may be structurally favoured to read between the lines, to acquire the acquaintance--with type knowledge and to decipher the deep meanings embedded in sub-line words (Lee, 1994:28). Moreover, the desire by China to establish its peaceful international image also contributes to its conservative attitude in the reporting.

Another indirect way for the *People’s Daily* to express its attitude is through commentary. Usually, the news coverage in the *People’s Daily* seldom had its obvious attitude but when it comes to the big event, the relative commentaries will act as the expression of an attitude. That explains the reason why Commentary took the second position in the category of genre in the *People’s Daily*. However, as presented in the findings chapter, the overwhelming commentaries in the *People’s Daily* were by-line articles. That means though those commentaries had obvious attitude involved, they were only personal opinions not representing the paper’s standpoint. But, on the other hand, the choice of the editor in picking up the commentaries is a silent implication of the attitude.

Nonetheless, faced with some special issues, the *People’s Daily* took the tough and clear attitude as well. The military topic is such a case. Therefore, in the “Same Theme” group, when the U.S. Pentagon published its annual assessment on China’s military ability, the *People’s Daily* answered by issuing two stories with a tough and clear attitude. One of the articles was a commentary and the other one, hard news. Like the other commentary in the *People’s Daily*, this one was a by-line article with explicit attitude. However, this hard news with strong and tough attitude in the *People’s Daily* is an exception. Additionally, this hard news was a summary of the news conference held by the Foreign Ministry which further proved that the newspaper stood by the government and was influenced by the standpoint of the government.

However, the articles with tough and explicit attitude in the *People’s Daily* were few and most stories with implicit attitude were classified into the group with the neutral attitude. Therefore, the neutral attitude in the *People’s Daily* was prominent. Yet the

phenomenon under the superficial neutral attitude is still another kind of abnormal behaviour of objectivity. The neutral attitude in the *People's Daily* achieves by avoiding exploring the questions and obscuring the implicit attitude of the event. Consequently, readers cannot receive comprehensive information from the newspaper.

5.4 Foreign Policy

International news acts as a bridge, connecting the reported country to the reporting country and building a certain relationship between them. The direction and the focus presented in the reporting are different in terms of a nation's foreign policy. In other words, the foreign policy plays a role in the reporting to a certain extent; either directly or indirectly. The relation between the newspaper and the foreign policy of the government is very tight in some countries like China while it is not so absolute in some countries like the United States, but still with a certain connection.

The concerns of the foreign policy of the United States are characterised by three aspects: the ideology, the security and the economy (Li and Liu, 1996:347). The United States is engaged in spreading around its politics and its democracy. That ambition presents it as the international police and to intervene in other countries' internal issues from the Middle East area to Asia. That behaviour causes the tense relationship between the U.S. and some countries and thereby threatens the security of the United States. The economy construction has evaluated the most significant issue to many countries in the world. With a further globalization in the economic field, a nation's economic power exerts even stronger influence in other fields such as politics and culture, etc.

Those three aspects of the U.S. foreign policy were reflected in the reporting of the *New York Times* and they also impacted on the journalists' attitude in their reports. What are reflected in the *New York Times* are the reports about China on political and economic topics.

The strength of the economic topic in the *New York Times* is evident from the quantity of the economic news items. The *New York Times* issued 13 pieces of news items related to economy within 15 days, accounting for one fourth of the total number. This gave the economic topic a first ranking among other topics. That favour in the Chinese economy is also symbolized in the diversity of these reports. 13 stories involve information from the stock, the share, economic policy, to the car sale etc, reflecting different facets of the development of China's economy. In addition, the *New York Times* paid attention to the economic cooperation between the two nations by issuing three stories. Eckstein (1977:92) points out that there is no doubt that economic consideration have played a major role in shaping the character of Sino-

American economic relations since 1971. However, the negative attitude overwhelmingly dominated 10 out of 13 business stories.

The attention to China's economic issue leads to another reason, which is relevant to the security of Americans. When the security issue is concerned with the foreign relationship with China, it does not mean the military conflict but instead, it inclines to a potential threat which might endanger the United States in the future. "China Threat Theory" is such a case. Since the open-door policy, trade exchanges between China and the United States have gradually warmed up. Subsequently, with the United States' increasing investment in China, as well as the cheap Chinese goods flowing into the United States, the United States to China's trade has turned from a surplus to a deficit. And this state is still in a rising tendency. Faced with China's rapid economy increase, American scholars sent out a signal of "China Threat Theory". In the 1990s, this theory spread and was strengthened by the American media greatly. Consequently, in the eyes of the Americans, the most prominent features of the Sino-US relations are both economic: that China has led to the loss of the work of the United States and the US-China trade deficit.⁵³ The negative information about Chinese economy transmits a signal that the China's economic development is not perfect, but has many problems. By doing so, such stories are "relevant to Americans or American interests with interpretations that apply to American values". Their preponderant emphasis is thus placed on "foreign news at home" (Lee, 1994:19).

Some issues related to China's social and political topics present the extraordinary interest in the *New York Times*, such as the freedom of religion and one-child policy. During the 15-day study period, the *New York Times* published two stories related to these two issues. The stories relating to the above topics were not published as much as were the stories related to the economic topic. That is partly because of the constraints accessing the resource.

The *New York Times* also paid attention to the relationship between China and other countries. But the situation that the *New York Times* reported the relations between China and other countries is much simpler than the *People's Daily* did. First of all, the newspaper just issued four stories altogether. These 4 news items share two similar characteristics; simple and negative. Publishing them combined news values with the foreign policy of the U.S. Two out of four news items in the *New York Times* were under 200 words. The news item related to the relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan was as short as 43 words. The short length makes the attitude of the stories even more apparent, either positive or negative as that interpreted in the

⁵³ 2007 年 12 月 12 日 08:36:11 来源: 环球时报 (2007/12/12 08:36:11 Resource from: Global Times)

simplification of the previous section of this study. The *New York Times* leaned towards the negative side.

The choice for the *New York Times* to issue news items related to the countries of Costa Rica and Nicaragua takes into more account the news values of the relevance, proximity and the readers' interest. Secondly, the relevance to the health problem is of interest to the American people. Thus when there is a health threat to the local people, the newspaper regard it as news with news values. Those two items were also very short, i.e. fewer than 200 words and both of them were negative stories.

Another news item in the foreign relations about China was related to a neighbouring country of China, Myanmar. Myanmar is viewed as one of the few military authoritarian countries in the world. These two countries, in the eyes of the West, one the communist country, and the other military country are both so different in terms of the political system of the other countries. The selling point for this news story was brought about when these two countries encountered unpleasant incidences. Subsequently, the *New York Times* regarded this unpleasantness as a news value and published this story with a negative tone.

Similarly, China's foreign policy imposes an impact in its reporting. The Chinese government pursues an independent and peaceful foreign policy. That implies two significant signals. First, China safeguards its sovereignty and unity so it objects any country to interfere in its internal affairs. Secondly, China will not impose its own values to other countries or groups of any alliance and therefore it opposes hegemony and power politics. "Making foreign things serve China" aims to reinforce the country's potentials of self-reliance and accelerate its socialist construction (Eckstein, 1977:64). The foreign policy reflected in the *People's Daily* focuses on three different aspects: economic issues, foreign relations between US and other countries and the Taiwan issue.

As the strongest power entity in the world, the American economic model has drawn China's attention. Like the same the situation in the *New York Times*, the economic topic in the *People's Daily* ranked first position among the six categories, accounting for 34 percent. The difference between the two newspapers in the economic issue was the attitude. While the negative attitude dominated the *New York Times*, the neutral and the positive attitude shared fair allocation in the *People's Daily*. The peaceful and independent foreign policy is to establish a stable environment for its economic development. China's trade was characterized not only by sharp fluctuations in volume but by marked shifts in direction, reflecting major turning points in China's foreign relations (Eckstein, 1977:71). In regards with the issue that negative reports would lead to political differences and would affect economic exchanges between China and the United States, the international news coverage in the *People's Daily*

had more of a neutral attitude. Therefore, Eckstein (1977:58) indicates that China's foreign trade policies reflect a complex interaction between its foreign policies, its internal political developments, and the dictates of economic necessity or comparative advantage.

The political topic took second position out of most stories in the *People's Daily*. This political issue was more related to the relations between the United States and other countries. Although in its foreign policy, the Chinese side stresses that it will not ally with other countries, it is obviously concerned with the dynamic relations among other countries. Therefore, while the *New York Times* published 4 pieces of news items related to the relationship between China and other countries, the *People's Daily* on the other hand published 18 stories about the relationship between the United States and other countries.

The fact that the news items about the Foreign Relations in the *People's Daily* is five times than that in the *New York Times* reveals that the Chinese side is more concerned with the politics of the United States than the U.S. is, with the politics of China. Those 18 stories in the *People's Daily* involve 9 countries and regions. Superficially, those stories were about the relationship between the U.S. and other countries; they actually reflected a certain relationships between China itself and those countries. In light of their relationship with China, those 18 countries and regions were classified into four groups. The first group included the countries of Iran, Cuba, Sudan and Venezuela which have a certain significant relationship with China, either from the political aspect or from the economic one. In addition, those countries often hold a tough attitude towards the United States and the leaders from those countries are not afraid to criticize the U.S. directly. The second group consists of the countries of Russia and India which are the two biggest neighbouring countries of China. From a certain angle, they have a cooperative relationship with China in the aspect of economy or military, but from another angle, they can also be a challenge to China in the same fields. To be specific is the military threat from Russia and the economic competition from India and the border dispute as well. The third group is the European Union, which is regarded as one of the strong entities in the world. The fourth group consists of some random countries, depending on the level of emergency of the events.

The topics related to the above countries are divided into three categories, i.e. economy, politics and military which are in accordance to China's foreign policy. To those countries in the first group, three news items were involved but all had a negative attitude. This does not mean the negative attitude of China towards those countries but it means that the content presented in the stories were negative. For instance, one news item was related to Venezuela. Venezuela protested the United States' closure of its private radio stations in the United States, criticizing the U.S. for

interfering in its internal affairs and violated their right to freedom of expression. Therefore, the meaning of negativity in this story is not related to the country of Venezuela, but instead, it means the critic tone used in the story. The connotation behind this story is that the United States is using double standards to measure the freedom of speech. On the one hand, it criticized other countries for lack of freedom of expression while on the other hand, it itself misused its administrative authority by limiting other countries' freedom of speech. The Chinese newspaper borrowed the voice of Venezuela to express its opinion. These two stories were both negative attitudes and through them the *People's Daily* indirectly expressed its negative standpoint. This indirect method stems from its foreign policy—peaceful route which avoids offending the United State in a positive conflict. The indirect tone also comes out with the Chinese cultural ideology; the implicit expression as stated before. With regard to the country of Bolivia, the reason to publish it is similar to the one related to the countries of Cuba and Venezuela.

The reason for the *People's Daily* choosing the stories about the relations between the United States and India and Russia combines the news value and the Chinese foreign policy. On the one hand, these two countries possess the geographical relevance to China, and they are also elite countries in the world. On the other hand, the choosing is from the necessary consideration of the national defense. The Russian military power and the Indian economic boom urge China to pay attention to them and their interaction with the U.S.

Although Europe is far away from China in terms of its geographical location, it is another pivot on the map of the global power. The *People's Daily* issued coverage on the United States and the European Union's proposal to build up Trans-Atlantic free trade zone. The concern considering the cooperation of the two strong powers in the world contributed to the publication of the stories included in this group.

Therefore, there are two characteristics for the *People's Daily* to report the relations between the United States and other countries. First and foremost, the newspaper paid attention to those countries that are in opposition to the United States so as to illuminate China's foreign standpoint. Secondly, the newspaper was sensitive to the cooperation between the other powers with the United States, worrying the appearance of the strong allies. However, those characteristics maintain the writing model of the *People's Daily* which is implicit opinion expression. Even those articles that condemned the U.S., the *People's Daily* applied the borrowing technique to prevent the possibility of diplomatic unpleasantness with the U.S. That is because China would continue a policy of avoiding overt clashes with the United States in order to guarantee its persistent economic development.

To both the United States and China, the Taiwan issue is a special topic. China views the Taiwan issue as its internal affairs while the U.S. thinks that it has the responsibility within Taiwan and towards the Taiwan issue. This responsibility of the U.S. originated from China's civil war in the late 1940s. The U.S. government supported the Jiang Kaishi government against the Mao Zedong's communist government. At last, although with the financial and arms support from the U.S., Jiang was defeated and fled to Taiwan Island. After that, the Taiwan government still kept its special relations with the U.S. though the United States recognized Beijing in 1979 as the sole representative of China and the Chinese people (Chang, 1990:181). According to a poll taken late in 1975, 61 percent of the American people wanted to normalize relations with Beijing, but 70 percent wanted to do so without breaking relations with Taiwan. On the Chinese side, a research discovered that most Chinese think that the Taiwan issue might be the Sino-US conflict fuse in the future.⁵⁴

This divergence in the Taiwan issue of the two nations was also presented in the reports in the two newspapers. During the short 15 days' study period, the *New York Times* issued one story while the *People's Daily* published two; one commentary and the other hard news. The commentary in the *People's Daily* criticized those two American scholars who attempted to support the "independence of Taiwan". The hard news was a summary of a news conference held by the foreign ministry of China. It originally explained the government attitude to its toxic toothpaste event, but in the last part of this story, the journalist used very short sentences to reclaim the Chinese government's standpoint in the Taiwan issue.

One interesting phenomenon presented in the *People's Daily* is the change of attitude. When it comes to the topics of the Taiwan issue, the military issue and other issues tightly related to relationship between the U.S. and other countries, the attitude in the *People's Daily* was more prone to negativity. That shows the news issues present the nation's standpoint and attitude in a certain issues.

As a result, with the influence of the nation's foreign policy, the two newspapers focused more from the standpoint of the government and preferred to report the news with a negative attitude even though the negative attitude is not the only main rhythm of the *People's Daily*.

5.5 Nationality and Cultural Bias

Apart from the foreign policy, international news is also affected by nationality and cultural bias. In the information age, "power" is derived as much from the ability of a

⁵⁴ 2007 年 12 月 12 日 08:36:11 来源: 环球时报 (2007/12/12 08:36:11 Resource from: Global Times)

nation to use media diplomacy to align its international image with its national identity (Ebo, 1997:43). In the process of transmitting international information, the criteria for reporting and selecting stories combine with the nationality of the journalists, editors and media outlets. National media express “qualities of their nations” through news values based on national political philosophy, common social heritage, and values of its constituent audience (Peterson, 1979:116).

Sometimes, the loyalty is a very natural happening to the journalists. They use their national value system to measure international affairs, and regard their personal identity as equal to the national identity. As a result, national identity is a fundamental aspect of journalists’ identity (Katz, D. in Rivenburgh 1965:366). Bloom (1990:53) echoes that when related to media coverage of foreign relations, the idea of a “national identity dynamic” predicts that journalists confronted with opportunities to preserve, defend, or enhance identity which will tend to “act” through the construction of media presentations biased toward those ends. When faced with controversial topics, such as military, politics, the nationality value more easily stands by the national ideology. For instance, when the Chinese side issued two stories defending this inaccurate assessment, the *New York Times’* story still stood on the side of its Pentagon report. Likewise, two stories issued in the *People’s Daily* only outlined China’s standpoint, maintaining its own opinion. Mowlana (1997:35) indicates that the media often side with the perceived national interests of the system of which they are a part. As a result, the national value makes it difficult to maintain journalistic independence and neutrality in international reporting. Not only are journalists but also the editors are influenced by their national values when selecting news stories and arranging the layout of the newspaper. The fact that in some special issues, all the related stories were presented with a tough and negative attitude reveals that the editors in the *People’s Daily* were using their rights to safeguard their country’s standpoint. Lippmann (1995:10) thus claims that since the war, editors have come to believe that their highest duty is not to report but to instruct, not to print news but to save civilization, not to publish what Benjamin Harris calls “the Circumstances of Public Affairs, both abroad and at home”, but to keep the nation on the straight and narrow. However, by doing so, national journalists (and editors), by and large, probably inject a good deal more opinion into their news stories and this opens the press to accusations of bias and distortions (Hachten, 2005:106).

In addition, the cultural difference of nations generates misunderstanding which might affect the objectivity in the story as well. The fact that the media serve as a cultural and ideological arm of the national policy is blatant. But the fact remains that most national-media journalists are members of the professional class whose upbringing and basic values are deeply embedded in the dominant of their own culture. This cultural background affects the writing model in a certain way. Berry (1990) in his

analysis of *New York Times* coverage of five foreign policy “failures”, named cultural bias as a key variable in media support and criticism of foreign policy. Similarly, news selection processes have been shown to be based on local salience and cultural orientation (Peterson, 1979:116).

Furthermore, other limitations also act as obstacles preventing the journalists from objective reporting. Journalists’ lack of familiarity with the countries and cultures they cover has made media coverage of foreign issues general and reliant on self-interested (Malek and Wiegand, 1997:12). Secondly, the factors accounting for the nature of foreign policy and international affairs reporting include the problems of access and the government’s advantage in controlling the release of information. Added to these is the censorship in foreign countries (Mowlanam, 1997:38). The inability to go to a local place and observe conditions directly conspired to maintain a veil of obfuscation around what the other country was really like. Furthermore, that the reporters stationed in China or in America do not have extensive training in local studies also escalates the divergence in the two countries.

In international news, some topics frequently appeared in the two newspapers, such as economy and politics. The reason for their frequency is related to the foreign policy. To those topics, the impact from the national foreign policy is salient, especially when the conflict between the two nations incurs. Journalists subconsciously select topics, construct the story and the choice for the editor in picking up the stories, framing the layout also reflects the impact from the national policy. A number of studies conducted over the last four decades show that the American media, auspiciously the elite press and the major media outlets, have consistently supported American foreign policy decisions, at least in their initial stages, without seriously challenging the basic assumptions inherent in these decisions (Mowlana, 1997:32). The case in China is similar. This influence might be invisible, from the unconscious nature, or it might come from the direct interference from the authority, the high-profile department. Some other limitations, such as the nationalism, the cultural differences, prevent the journalist from comprehensive observation in the international reports.

Cohen (1965:199-200) observed that reporters have two simultaneous roles; that of informing the public and explaining foreign policy and that of participating in the foreign policy process by questioning and criticizing the government decision makers. But as the study observed that a number of factors have interfered with the media to carry out its second role. In such situations, the flow of the information loses its balance in presenting the fact and the result for this imbalance is the lack of objectivity.

5.6 Conclusion

In summary, there were multiple factors that affect the nature of international news reports both in the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*. In most – if not in all – instances selection is unavoidable. The political system, the journalistic culture and the laws of a country etc. all influences in some way the selection of news, by the kind and number of available information sources. The journalists most often know about these influencing factors, but the audience is often unaware of it. The national foreign policy, the nationality and cultural bias are the common factors that influence the reporting in the two newspapers. In addition, some specific factors are subjective to the two newspapers separately, such as the economic factor and stereotype to the *New York Times* and the political and cultural factors to the *People's Daily*. Those common or different factors result in the characteristics of the two newspapers respectively which are the negative attitude dominant in the *New York Times* and the neutral attitude that was prominent in the *People's Daily*. However, all these characteristics are not a normal reflection of the principle of objectivity as the information about each other's countries by the two newspapers is unbalanced and incomplete to a certain extent.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the Findings and Analysis

In a research period of 15 days, the *New York Times* issued 46 news items about China and the *People's Daily* published 44 about the United States. By using the quantitative and the qualitative methods while at the same time combining them with the method of sampling and the case study, this research aimed at answering two research questions: how did the two newspapers report each other's countries and what did they report? The presentation of the conclusion consists of two sections based on the different methods used in this research.

In the section using the quantitative method, the presentation reveals that the *New York Times* overwhelmingly depicted China with a negative attitude. This is because first and foremost, the news items with a negative attitude in the *New York Times* accounted for 67 percent of the total number of news items viewed during the study period while the news items with a neutral attitude and a positive attitude accounted for only 22 percent and 11 percent respectively. Secondly, when the 46 news items were separately classified into categories in terms of topic, genre and the amount of words, it was discovered that any category that contains the most news stories was also the one that involved the most number of stories with the negative attitude. That is 10 out of 13 news items under the category of business had a negative attitude; 70 percent of news items with fewer than 500 words also had a negative attitude and 26 out of 33 news items in the genre category of News were also negative. Generally there was an overwhelming domination of negativity in the *New York Times* among most news items on issues related to China.

The most prominent characteristic of the *People's Daily* was the number of news items with a neutral attitude, equalling to the number of news items with a negative attitude. Although the news items with a positive attitude in the *People's Daily* were the least, the difference between this attitude and the other two attitudes was as small as 4 pieces of news items. In the topic of business and politics which contained most stories, the number of the news items with the neutral attitude was more than that with the other two attitudes. In the genre News which contained the most news items, the number of news stories with a neutral attitude equated to that with the number of news items with a negative attitude. Due to the prominent performance of the neutral attitude in the number of news stories as well as the slight difference among the three attitudes, the *People's Daily* is more balanced in the manner in which it allocates the three attitudes within its news stories.

In the section using the qualitative method, three categories of Same Theme, Foreign Relations and Own Characters, were used for the purposes of content analysis of the two newspapers. The research found out that though the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* were interested in the same themes, they reported their stories in different ways. That could be different from the writing model, the writing techniques and the usage of news values. Both newspapers used the technique of "borrowing resource" in the stories; however, the purpose for using this borrowing technique was not the same for each of the newspapers. The *New York Times* borrowed resources for completing a story while the *People's Daily* borrowed resources to express its standpoint or opinion. Additionally, the *New York Times* prefers the writing model of "emphasizing problems", "using detailed description" and "expanding the whole picture from smaller aspects" while the *People's Daily* uses the model of "direct record", "general description" and "simplifying disputes". In the categories of Foreign Relations, the *New York Times* focussed more on the unexpected and negative news events, for purposes of quenching the appetite of its local readership while the *People's Daily* concentrated on economic, political and military topics, in order to abide by its foreign policy. In the category of Own Character, the *New York Times* sustained the negative priority while the *People's Daily* avoided the specific dispute in the stories but stressed the "bright future".

The function of the analysis chapter was to answer the last research question: why the *New York Times* was dominated with the negative attitude and why the neutral attitude was prominent in the *People's Daily*. The theories and concepts about news values, objectivity, stereotype and foreign policy practically apply in the analysis part. In the case of the *New York Times*, it is the factors such as the professional tradition of the American journalists, the commercial benefit linked to the fact that the American reader has little interest beyond their borders, stereotype ideology and the US foreign policy, that contribute to the negativity in the news stories. And for the case of the *People's Daily*, the political ownership, the cultural tradition and the Chinese foreign policy are the factors that prevent the evaluation of the news stories, thereby leading to a conservative and implicit attitude which is classified as the neutral attitude.

Therefore, the conclusion is that both newspapers violate the principle of objectivity in reporting international news. Balance and accuracy is the essence of the principle of objectivity. Mowlana (1997:33) points out that in the entire question of the media and foreign policy, the first major salient items to be considered are the quantity and quality of foreign news. The *New York Times* lost the quantitative balance in the reports about China because nearly 70% of its reports were negative. The *People's Daily* broke the principle of qualitative accuracy in the report about the United States because either implicit expression or avoidance of the problems involved in an effort to pursue neutrality does not objectively reflect a news event.

Bennett (1990:266) indicates that presenting a story affects objectivity. Both the excessive amount of negativity and the superficial neutrality could not present an event or a country objectively. These are both traits of non-objectivity.

The result produced from such non-objectivity is that coverage is often superficial and too often uninformed (Stevenson and Cole, 1984:15). That will further guide the reader of the newspapers since global communication affects public opinion (Hachten, 2005:23). Objectivity is one of the most basic and necessary elements guaranteeing the quality of the reporting and thereby attracting readers and trust from the readers. Unbalanced information or inaccurate information will mislead readers and thereby produce new stereotype or further strengthen the previous wrong stereotype. A survey shows that continuously present China's military with a negative attitude in the American media resulted in 75 percent of Americans believing that China's rising military strength poses a serious or potential threat against the United States. And this figure was just 66 percent in 2005.⁵⁵ In fact, the military power of China in many fields lags far behind that of its neighbours, such as Russia's nuclear weapons, South Korea, Japan and even Taiwan's military modernization. China's military strength is behind the times (Li and Liu, 1996:68). Likewise, those "neutral stories" that temporally cover up or simplify the problem will make the stories dull and ultimately lose the interest of the reader.

The director of the Institute of Strategy and International study of Malaysia, Nordin · Subi targeted an article in the "Yomiuri Shimbun" in 1996, saying that criticizing China should be fair and impartial, but if China has achieved progress, then that should be recognized as well (Li and Liu, 1996:67). In the same year, the former U.S. President George Walker Bush at a seminar in Beijing said, that "I was very worried that recently the United States criticized China too much. Some U.S. congressmen do not understand, nor know how to deal with Beijing."

6.2 The Resolution

The non-objectivity phenomenon reflected in the two newspapers in this study is different from the previous one which was usually criticized by mixing the journalist's and the editor's subjective opinion with the basic facts of an event. In the cases of the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily*, the requirement for objectivity is to balance the total number of the three attitudes and to write a comprehensive report of a news affair. Nowadays, with the constant dynamics in the international

⁵⁵ 2007 年 12 月 12 日 08:36:11 来源: 环球时报 (2007/12/12 08:36:11 Resource from: Global Times)

environment, political influence, economic factors and cultural differences, non-objectivity is bound to be present in various versions. The case of the *New York Times* and the *People's Daily* only represents a few of such examples to a certain extent. But on the other hand, with the increase in advanced communication technologies as well as the rise of citizen journalists, reporters are under pressure to offer objective coverage with higher requirements and standards.

As early as 1935, the American Newspaper Guild's code of ethics officially endorsed the echoes of objectivity by stating, "The newspapermen's first duty is to give the public accurate and unbiased news reports" (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:41). And journalism's ethnic obligation is to reflect the real world, with accuracy, fairness, and balance (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:111). Those principles should not be changed even in today's situation. Therefore, under the new and higher requirements of objective reports, media outlets, journalists, and editors should act as the most important executive roles by making an effort to achieve objectivity of high-standard in news coverage. The following section will show in detail how media outlets, journalists and editors can make an effort in achieving this kind of objectivity. In addition, the section will also explore how an effort can be put in the writing of news items in order to attain high standard objectivity.

6.2.1 The Effort by the Media Outlets

The effort from the media outlets can guarantee objectivity in news coverage. In the chain of information conveying, media outlets are the middle loop, which link the government to the journalists. Therefore, media outlets in a way function as leverage in an effort to contribute to objective reports.

On the one hand, media should avoid too much interference from the government. Indeed, this is not an easy task for either the American or the Chinese media. Though the media in the U.S. is under the name of an independent entity, they are involved in lobbying government and seeking government favours (Hachten, 2005:62). In the case of China, as the party is the only owner of all media outlets, for the media to be completely independent from the government is impossible. But that does not mean that the media should be dependent on the government. Instead, the media should make full use of its rights, playing a subjective initiative to avoid the direct inference from the government. It should oversee if the government sends out the right and objective signal of its foreign policies and that of other countries. On the other hand, as a gatekeeper, media outlets also should inspect the quality of the coverage of the journalists. Acting as a gatekeeper is not a novel theory for media outlets.

Nevertheless, in light of the problems that exist in the two newspapers in this study, media outlets should strengthen their adjusting function. The adjusting function can

be presented in three different aspects: the quality, the quantity, and the allocation of attitude in the news stories. The media outlets should adjust unbalanced content of the news stories by preventing issues like over-entertainment, over-commercialization or over-politicizing the news. Likewise, the quantity of the domination of over-entertained, over-commercialized or over-politicization also should be adjusted by the media outlets. Furthermore, media outlets should balance the allocation of the three attitudes in their news stories. Since the media's attitudes have played a surprisingly important and destructive role in public affairs (Fallows, 1996), media outlets should be careful with what they convey to their readers. Stevenson and Gaddy (1984:88) argue that positive accomplishments rather than conflict should be reported so that news can play a positive role in political and social development. Let us take the China-US Talk as an example. When the three pieces of news items about Talk in the *New York Times*, two hard news stories and one commentary, were already of a negative attitude, the media outlet should relatively publish the stories with the neutral attitude or positive attitude in an effort to balance the extreme negativity in one event. Likewise, in the side of the *People's Daily*, the paper should comprehensively reflect the event, not only the achievements but also the problems or disputes left of the Talk between two countries.

6.2.2 The Effort by the Journalists and Editors

As specific operators in news reporting, journalists and editors are other factors that are responsible for objective coverage. The particularity of international news leads to the difference between the correspondent and the local reporter. That also requires the correspondents to fulfil more obligations and responsibilities in efforts to guarantee objectivity in reporting. The correspondents should have two more roles in international reporting.

First, correspondents act as a reformer committed to improving their knowledge system. In explaining the meaning or importance of any event, a journalist also runs the risk of being considered biased or partial (Hachten, 2005: xv). The personal and native knowledge system could easily be a standard to measure international issues. Nevertheless, nations are different from the political system and cultural background. Therefore, the correspondent should explore and absorb other countries' natures and make his own knowledge system compatible with other diverse knowledge. In order to do so, the correspondent should first avoid over-familiarity...Avoid words that suggest how you feel about something (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:58). The familiar-feeling of the correspondent to an event often works with its inherent knowledge and with strong personal subjective colour. At the same time, the correspondent should update his knowledge time and again in relation to the changes in the international environment, as well as the alternation of the policies at home and outside.

Secondly, the correspondent should act as a person who helps to solve trouble instead of the one who creates trouble. Different cultural views along with the issues of power and competition cause international conflicts (Lu, 2002:9). But the role of journalism should not be to stimulate debate, but to circulate objective information that would be useful to experts in reaching the best decision (Hackett and Zhao, 1998: 174). Furthermore, journalists should not only raise public consciousness about issues, but also aid the public to “work through” community problems by helping to identify the root causes of those problems, the implications, and the “core values” at stake (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:201).

Therefore, in the case of ‘contaminated toothpaste’, the journalists of the *New York Times* might also report the news stories about if the Chinese authority has taken measures to prevent the further outflow of the toxic toothpaste, or the stories that introduce the readers how to deal with toxic toothpaste. Subsequently, the paper functions in informing readers the specific information and thereby quells the costumers’ panic caused by toxic toothpaste. The China side also should widely open the access to the media outlet and inform the public what action is done by the government in an effort to solve the problem.

In addition, in the light of the case of the *New York Times* and the *People’s Daily*, print journalism should accomplish the impersonal and conventional format by emphasizing the use of supposedly “transparent” and “neutral” language. Moreover, according to Frances Bula, “Distinct turns of phrase, adjectives, adverbs, bits of extraneous description—anything that calls attention to the writer or appears to imply some kind of subjective assessment should generally be removed” (Hackett and Zhao, 1998: 85). On the other hand, journalism cannot hide behind claims that it simply provides information; it must pay attention to who is accorded access, and to what perspectives are being used to frame stories (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:184).

6.2.3 The Effort in Writing News Stories

The improvement of objectivity in reporting can also be achieved from two aspects of the news stories: the news value and the content of the news stories.

Diversify the news values. There are many categories of news values. Galtung and Ruge came up with 12 categories of news values. Subsequently, more novel news values continue to be explored by scholars in future research, as well as by changes in the times. Focusing on one kind of news value or a few easily causes unbalanced coverage. The frequent application of negativity caused the *New York Times* to be one-sided in relation to Chinese issues. Furthermore, combining different news values together in a story will reduce the risk of unbalanced phenomena.

Improve the content. Improving the content of news stories consists of two aspects: from the writing mode and from the category of the content.

The native audiences are usually not as familiar with foreign issues as the local ones. Therefore, offering an elaborate context will promote the reader's understanding of the story. Moreover, it also helps the journalist clear up the ins and outs of the article so as to avoid non-objective interpretation. Hachten (2005:xv, 129) states that news should also provide placement in time by not only reporting what is happening, but explaining to us the background or the history of a particular story. News should also point out the similarities and differences in events because many events are important and because they fit a certain pattern and as such have added significance. Hachten also points out that news is said to be a "liquid", not a "solid" and thereby providing follow-up stories is important.

Apart from those, presenting an article with more interpretation is another method that can be used to balance the content of the story. Canada's 1980-81 Royal Commission on Newspapers argued that newspapers should also "go below the facts to their significance, to give the truth by interpreting without distorting" (Hackett and Zhao, 1998:44). Interpretation is different from opinion. More interpretation and explanation is not a bad thing if done carefully and does not sink to just opinion and speculation (Hachten, 2005:90).

Furthermore, the content of the news stories also should diversify from the aspect of genres and topics. Hackett and Zhao (1998:69) suggest that newspapers that softened their political edges and emphasized human interest stories could more easily attract mass audiences. Not only hard news, political and military news, more soft news, like features, and cultural news will dilute the smell of the gunpowder in some political news.

6.2.4 Changes and Hopes (Respect and Understanding)

In a network of a news story, the journalist, the editor, the reader, the newspaper and the government compose interacting elements that are relevant to objectivity. The relationship between the United States and China is a network of almost infinite complexity and variation. Given the secrecy of Chinese politics and the complexity and unpredictability of both Chinese and American politics, the potential for misunderstanding and for mistakes is great (Barnds, 1977:230). Respecting and understanding the condition of another's country, including its politics and cultural background, can be the ground contribution of objective coverage. Journalists in different countries differed in their understanding of them. Farmer (1990:262) suggests that it is the reporter's job to listen very carefully to Chinese voices, to sift from those voices the essential facts, and then to relay to the reader an interpretation

of Chinese reality that makes sense in American English. Likewise, presenting the progress of the American political system and the advanced nature of its social structure does not mean to deny another type of social system. Objective presentation is for the full use of referencing.

The expectations for objectivity, balance, and impartiality in news stories are the demands of the reader and our society. Lippmann (1995:15) implies that there can be no higher law in journalism than to tell the truth and shame the devil. The solution is for non-objectivity to strive for balance carefully. Sig Gissler, a former editorial page editor of *The Milwaukee Journal* and now a journalism professor wrote: “We are great at raising people’s anxieties but we don’t leave them with much sense of hope or remedy” (Hachten, 2005:96). It was a good idea to at least shade in some potential solutions to all those problems we see.

In simple terms, the requirement of objectivity is objective description, both from the quantity of the news stories and from the quality of the news content. In 1996, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir warned that “once we treat a number of countries as the enemy of tomorrow, then these countries will become today’s enemy” (Li and Liu, 1996:61). With peace and friendship, no country would like to have more international enemies than friends. Journalistic workers could build a peaceful and friendly bridge that connects countries through objective international reports under their “pens”.

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Appendix 1

第二次中美战略经济对话闭幕

《人民日报》（2007-05-24 第 03 版）

本报华盛顿 5 月 23 日电 （记者唐勇）第二次中美战略经济对话 23 日在华盛顿闭幕。中国国家主席胡锦涛特别代表、国务院副总理吴仪和美国总统布什特别代表、财政部长保尔森共同主持闭幕式并总结对话成果。

吴仪表示，在双方共同努力下，第二次中美战略经济对话取得成功。双方围绕服务业、能源和环境、经济平衡增长和创新等议题进行了深入讨论和交流。在金融服务业、非金融服务业和投资、透明度等方面，双方明确了彼此的关切，加深了互信；在环保和能源领域，双方认为，两国在减少排放、提高效率、发展清洁能源和可再生能源等方面具有广泛合作空间，这些合作将为中美经贸关系注入新的活力；双方认为，有效的宏观经济政策，对促进两国经济平衡增长具有重要作用；双方同意通过政策交流和技术合作促进创新。

吴仪表示，中美经贸关系是当今世界最为复杂的经贸关系之一。要妥善处理这种关系，推动中美经贸合作不断向前发展，需要我们有智慧、有胆识、有能力地进行创造性的工作，本着平等协商、互利共赢的原则坦诚地开展对话和交流。中美战略经济对话为我们提供了一个好的合作平台和机遇。中方愿同美方共同努力，充分利用中美战略经济对话这一合作平台，全面推进中美经贸关系和中美建设性合作关系。

保尔森表示，第一次美中战略经济对话以来，双方一直在相互尊重基础上讨论两国共同经济利益。中方在这次对话中表现出的开放和积极态度给美方留下深刻印象。对话取得了阶段性成果，成为两国长期具有战略意义合作道路上的重要标志，必将增强我们的信心，鼓励我们继续前进。美中经贸关系沿着正确轨道发展对两国人民和世界经济都至关重要。我们要经常沟通、克服分歧，保持经济关系平衡发展，努力实现互利双赢，促进两国和世界经济增长。

双方商定，第三次中美战略经济对话将于今年 12 月在北京举行。

Appendix 2

对话协商 谋求共识（国际论坛）

《人民日报》（2007-05-24 第 03 版）

在第二次中美战略经济对话中，双方围绕服务业、能源和环境、经济平衡增长和创新等议题进行了深入讨论和交流。这一层级高、规模大、涵盖领域广的定期对话机制，自诞生之日起，就以注重战略性、综合性和长远趋势为特征而不以追求短期特定成果为目标。人们期望此次对话能就当前中美经贸关系中的一些热点问题达成共识。

如何评估当前中美经济关系？中美之间对此有着较大差异。中方不否认中美经贸关系中存在着各种各样的问题，但更强调中美经贸关系的大局是健康的、积极的。美方虽然也强调美中经济往来有利于两国经济的发展，但更突出双边经济关系中的负面因素。针对这一差异，国务院副总理吴仪日前在《华尔街日报》撰写专文，阐述中方立场，寻求美国公众的理解与支持。根据中国官方统计，从 1979 年中美建立外交关系到 2006 年，双边贸易额增加了 106 倍，年均增长 18.9%。在过去 10 年间，中国出口产品为美国消费者节约了 6000 亿美元。有 400 万—800 万美国人的工作同对华贸易密切相关，其中许多职位都是因美国零售商销售中国产品而产生的。应该承认，中美经贸关系的主流是互利共赢。

解决中美经贸关系中存在的问题，首先要弄清问题的根源是什么。中美双方对此有着不同的理解。美方将其归咎于中国过度干预人民币币值、对出口产品提供政府补贴、劳工权利保护不够等。中方则认为，中美之间贸易逆差的根源主要是经济全球化的影响和美国对外贸易政策的后果。正如吴仪指出的，贸易逆差是由同经济全球化相关的众多因素导致的，如储蓄和投资相关性、劳动力和投资配置的国际差异等等。以就业为例，美国国内制造业岗位的部分流失，是经济全球化时代资源和劳动力合理配置的必然结果，美国必须通过国内政策调整来解决。

中美经贸关系中存在的问题，只能通过协商对话来解决。中美战略经济对话正是其中最重要的一条管道。但不应忽视的是，美国国内存在一些借中美经贸问题捞取政治资本的组织和势力。一方面，他们以“美国利益守护神”自居，夸大中美经贸中存在的问题，提出一些损人不利己的制裁措施；另一方面，他们将中美经贸问题的根源归咎于中国的政治制度和经济体制，借此对中国内政指手画脚。这种将经济问题政治化的做法，最终损害的是中美两国的利益，是双方都不愿看到的。中美双方应共同努力，尽量排除干扰，为解决问题、发展关系创造条件。

从战略层次上把握中美经贸问题的实质，是解决具体问题的前提和基础。在这一层次上取得的成果和共识，其意义远比在某一具体议题上的协议更重要。这也正是中美战略经济对话备受关注的的原因所在。（作者为中国现代国际关系研究院美国所研究员）

Appendix 3

China Talks Don't Resolve Major Issues

By STEVEN R. WEISMAN

Published: May 24, 2007

WASHINGTON, May 23 — Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. and a team of cabinet members unveiled limited accords Wednesday with their Chinese counterparts to open markets in China but made little progress on major disputes over trade and currency.

The United States and China committed themselves to doubling daily passenger flights and granting American carriers “unfettered access” for cargo. Another accord called for joint cooperation to develop clean coal-burning technologies and reduce trade barriers to products that help control pollution.

While China also agreed to allow foreign financial firms to expand their operations there modestly, the Bush administration failed to achieve an increase in the ownership ceilings that the Chinese impose on joint ventures with American firms, officials said.

Mr. Paulson, a former Goldman Sachs executive who negotiated many deals in China, had unsuccessfully pressed Wu Yi, a vice premier who headed the Chinese team, on that issue over dinner at his home Monday night.

After the two-day session involving more than a dozen top officials on both sides, the Chinese started an unusual set of meetings with Congressional leaders to try to head off the possibility of sanctions against China this year.

But the difficulty of reaching that goal was made clear when Republicans and Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee released a tough letter to Ms. Wu, saying they had serious concerns about several Chinese economic practices.

The letter cited China’s “massive and constant interventions in the currency markets” to keep the value of its currency low, its use of subsidies to promote exports and its “inability to enforce intellectual property rights.” Over all, the letter accused China of not living up to its legal obligations under international trade agreements.

The letter sent a signal, if one were needed, that the talks were unlikely to deter Congress from trying to impose sanctions on Chinese exports this year. It was signed by Representatives Charles B. Rangel, Democrat of New York, and Jim McCrery of Louisiana, the chairman and ranking Republican on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. Rangel, in a telephone interview Wednesday evening, said that the meeting with Ms. Wu went well but that he told her that whatever the value of the agreements her team made with the Bush administration this week, “the legislative process will go forward.” He said he told her that Congress represented “the will of the people” on trade with China.

Mr. Paulson, who opposes such legislation, said at a news conference that the talks, the second session of a “strategic economic dialogue” begun last year — the first session was in Beijing in December — were worthwhile. “While we have much more work to do, we have tangible results of our efforts thus far,” he added.

Later, in an interview, the Treasury secretary declined to predict the impact on Congress of this week’s session. “All I can say is that we’ve made important progress, and that it’s more progress than we would have without the S.E.D,” referring to the strategic economic dialogue.

There were no statements to the press from the Chinese side, so it was left to the American side to describe the tone of the meetings, which it said was constructive and friendly, despite signs of deep unhappiness among the Chinese over recent American legal challenges to Chinese economic practices.

On Tuesday, Ms. Wu said that efforts by some to “politicize” the Chinese-American relationship were “absolutely unacceptable.” This was taken as a reference to the American challenges to Chinese subsidies of exports and piracy of DVDs.

Susan C. Schwab, the United States trade representative, speaking at the conclusion of the talks Wednesday, made it clear that her own session with Chinese leaders had done little to narrow differences on these issues. “Suffice it to say we had a healthy exchange of views,” she said.

Two other cabinet members — Mike Johanns, the agriculture secretary, and Michael O. Leavitt, the health and human services secretary — said they had used the dialogue to press the Chinese on strengthening the safety of food and medicine exports.

“I thought our conversation was helpful,” Mr. Johanns said.

Mr. Paulson offered mixed views about China’s movements on the currency issue, a particular flashpoint in Congress, where many lawmakers argue that China intervenes in the currency markets to keep the value of its currency low in relation to the dollar, a strategy that would promote its exports by making them cheaper for American consumers.

Noting that the value of the Chinese currency had appreciated a little more than 8 percent in two years, with a small increase in the last few days, the Treasury chief called on China to “move more quickly” on currency.

“We make the case, they listen and they are moving,” Mr. Paulson said. He said that an announcement last week that China was widening the band in which the currency could fluctuate each day was a “positive signal” but that more needed to be done over time.

Reaction to the announcements by Mr. Paulson and the other administration officials was generally positive among business groups. Groups critical of American trade practices were skeptical, sometimes extremely so.

“There was progress in some areas,” said Myron Brilliant, vice president for East Asia at the United States Chamber of Commerce. “From our standpoint, we want to see more in certain areas. But if you look at the overall picture, the glass is more than half full.”

But Alan Tonelson, a research fellow at the United States Business and Industrial Council, a group that generally opposes deals to reduce trade barriers and supports efforts to protect American industry from foreign competition, said the dialogue with China “stands exposed as a cynical Bush administration exercise in spin and P.R.”

He said the dialogue’s only purpose was to “fool the American people.”

Mr. Paulson, in the telephone interview, said the tone of the discussions was healthy even when both sides disagreed. “I think whenever you get a group of people that powerful together, you’re going to have a serious discussion on a range of topics,” he said.

Mr. Paulson said he was impatient for more concrete results himself and hoped there would be further progress before the third session of the dialogue, in Beijing in December.

“I have no doubt that we’re getting more results than we would have without this dialogue,” he said.

Appendix 4

Chinese Officials Extol Benefits of U.S. Relations

By STEVEN R. WEISMAN

Published: May 25, 2007

WASHINGTON, May 24 — Chinese leaders travelled from the White House to Capitol Hill on Thursday, trying to persuade skeptics of the benefits of the Chinese-American relationship. But they appeared to make little headway in quelling Congressional anger over China's economic practices.

China's Leaders Confront Their Own Manic Market (May 25, 2007) The delegation, led by Vice Premier Wu Yi, who was invited here by Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr., spent its time marshalling arguments that trade with China benefited Americans and warning that Congressional sanctions would disrupt the chances of resolving disagreements amicably.

The Chinese also made promises to invest in American businesses, declaring their hope that a recent "large-scale procurement and investment mission" in the United States — which they said had led to investments of \$32.6 billion in 25 cities and 24 states — would impress Americans.

The purchase by China this week of a \$3 billion nonvoting stake in the private equity firm Blackstone Group was cited as part of that investment drive.

But it was not clear whether China's buying spree would help it gain political support in the United States. The purchases could even result in the opposite — assertions by lawmakers that such aggressive acquisitions raise national security concerns. Two years ago, China provoked near-universal criticism in Congress when Cnooc, a state-owned oil company, tried to purchase Unocal for \$18 billion.

The investment drive has not provoked such a strong reaction. But after a session Thursday afternoon with Ms. Wu, Senator Harry Reid, Democrat of Nevada and the Senate majority leader, suggested that Congress remained prepared to approve legislation to impose trade sanctions against China.

"Both the U.S. and Chinese economies will be better off with a more healthy and balanced relationship," Mr. Reid said. "If China and the Bush administration won't take action to bring about more balance, there is growing sentiment in Congress to act."

His comments echoed those of the House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, and other Democrats on Wednesday.

Earlier Thursday, Ms. Wu met with President Bush at the White House, a counterpart to Mr. Paulson's meeting with President Hu Jintao of China last December.

Mr. Bush, at his Rose Garden news conference, emphasized several divisive issues between the United States and China left unresolved after two days of talks between Mr. Paulson and Ms. Wu and their respective teams.

He mentioned the American charge that China intervenes in currency markets to keep the value of its currency low in order to promote exports by making them cheaper to American consumers.

"One of the issues that I emphasized to Madam Wu Yi, as well as the delegation, was that we're watching very carefully as to whether or not they will appreciate their currency," Mr. Bush said.

He added that "we value our relationship" but that the trade deficit with China, which was \$232 billion last year, "must be addressed" at least in part by China allowing the value of its currency to rise.

The delegation of 15 ministers led by Ms. Wu was in Washington for the second session of a "strategic economic dialogue" established last year by Mr. Paulson to reduce tensions with China over several issues.

They completed two days of meetings Wednesday morning with agreements on expanding air cargo and passenger routes, investment opportunities for American companies in China, and sales of energy and environmental technology.

At the same time, they made no breakthroughs on the larger issues of trade, currency, and protection against piracy of DVDs and other goods in China. The Chinese remained adamantly opposed to recent American legal actions against piracy and what the administration charges are illegal subsidies of exports by China.

Mr. Paulson said earlier that he had been warned against sending the Chinese visitors to Capitol Hill, saying it would be a "dangerous cocktail" for the two sides to mix. But he said that both sides needed to understand each other better, and the Chinese needed to understand that Congress is the body that enacts trade laws.

Two Chinese officials, briefing reporters Thursday, said that Ms. Wu appreciated the lesson, but they warned against further confrontational tactics on trade with China.

“We hope that the U.S. Congress will be able to have a correct understanding of the importance and significance of China-US. economic and trade relations and will bear in mind the overall interests of the United States in approaching this issue,” said Xhu Guangyao, a finance ministry official.

Another issue brought up on Thursday was the American desire to export more beef to China, which has balked because of concerns about safety, citing cases of mad cow disease in the United States. Mr. Bush pressed the issue at his news conference.

“One area where I’ve been disappointed is beef,” he said. “They need to be eating U.S. beef. It’s good for them. They’ll like it. And so we’re working hard to get that beef market opened up.”

That was echoed by Senator Max Baucus, Democrat of Montana and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. Mr. Baucus cited what he said was an “unscientific ban” on American beef and the need to move on piracy and currency issues.

Appendix 5

FIVE DAYS; China Makes a U.S. Deal, but It's Not With Washington

By STEVEN R. WEISMAN

Published: May 26, 2007

THE United States and China ended talks with unfinished business, as China took a \$3 billion stake in the Blackstone Group. The Tracinda Corporation of Kirk Kerkorian sought to buy two Las Vegas properties for an estimated \$12 billion, and Coca-Cola moved to broaden its noncarbonated beverage portfolio with a \$4.1 billion deal.

TRADE ISSUES LINGER -- The Bush administration is trying to head off a drive in Congress for trade sanctions against China, but it did not get much help from the Chinese this week.

Two days of meetings between delegations of cabinet members from China and the United States, aimed at opening Chinese markets to American goods and services, concluded with limited agreements on air routes, financial services and energy and environmental technology.

Little progress was made on American demands that China crack down on piracy of American products and let the value of its currency appreciate to make its exports more expensive.

Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. counselled patience, but on Capitol Hill patience seems to be running out. The trade deficit with China soared to \$232 billion last year, and Congressional leaders of both parties are threatening to enact punishments if China does not move faster on trade issues.

The Chinese visitors said Americans should realize the value of their economic relationship, pointing to \$32.6 billion in investments they have recently made in America, including a \$3 billion nonvoting stake in the private equity firm Blackstone Group.

Appendix 6

误导国际舆论的报告（国际论坛）

席来旺

《人民日报》（2007-05-27 第 03 版）

5月25日，美国国防部公布了关于中国军力情况的最新年度报告。在这份报告发表的前一天，美国防部长盖茨在五角大楼举行的记者会上“特意”对报告进行了一番说明，强调这份报告“并没有夸大其词”。可是，仔细阅读这份长达50页的报告，人们不难发现，与以往类似的年度报告相比并没有什么明显改变。该报告仍然在对中国的安全战略和军事战略，以及军事能力妄加评论，并攻击中国的国防和军事现代化建设。可以说，这份报告又在刻意渲染“中国军事威胁”。

美国参谋长联席会议主席佩斯在五角大楼24日的记者会上称，一个军事威胁可以分为两个方面，第一是军力，第二是意图。佩斯还特别强调，重要的一点是，美国有击败任何“新军事能力”的手段。对照报告，人们隐约可以感到，佩斯的这番话似乎也是意有所指。

该报告在其“提要”部分说，美国“欢迎一个和平与繁荣的中国”崛起，但是中国的“未来前景仍不确定”，其中包括中国“扩张的军力”，以及其“如何使用军力的意图”。报告忧虑中国具有“开发高端武器系统的能力”，强调中国具备与美国军力抗衡的“最大潜力”，拥有能“多次抵消美国传统军事优势的破坏性军事技术”。

报告不仅夸大台湾海峡两岸军事实力对比，指责中国全力“防独促统”，而且还武断地宣称，中国在为“争夺资源与领土”等地区性冲突积蓄军力。尤其是，报告竟然说中国不断增长的军事能力是改变东亚军事平衡的一个“主要因素”，甚至对近年来中国在中俄合作、中非合作论坛北京峰会等问题上的政策提出责难。报告更污蔑中国“出于对能源需求的考虑”，加强与一些“违反国际人权、支持国际恐怖主义与核扩散的国家”发展关系……

自2000年以来，美国防部每年都向国会提交所谓中国军力情况的年度报告。2007年度的报告再次试图以错误观点误导国际舆论，显然有悖于当前中美两国、两军关系发展的主流。

任何主权国家为维护自己的安全和捍卫领土完整，都必须拥有和发展适当的军事力量，没有任何一个国家会放弃这种权利。众所周知，美国是当今世界头号军事强国。即使如此，美国仍在紧锣密鼓地推进军事转型，谋求绝对军事优势。中国是一个幅员辽阔、人口众多的发展中国家，国防投入长期处于较低水

平。中国保持一定的军事力量是自身防卫的客观需要，是维护国家安全和领土完整的正当行为，不会对任何国家构成威胁。事实上，中国始终高举和平、发展、合作的旗帜，一贯主张树立互信、互利、平等、协作的新安全观，重视发展与包括美国在内的所有国家的关系。报告不顾事实，蓄意渲染所谓的中国军事威胁，是完全站不住脚的。

Appendix 7

China Disputes Defense Assessment

By JOSEPH KAHN

Published: May 28, 2007

BEIJING, May 27 — A Pentagon report that voiced concerns about China's buildup of land- and sea-based ballistic missiles "misleads international opinion" and tries to spread false fears of a China threat, Chinese state news media said Sunday.

A sharply worded commentary in The People's Daily, the main newspaper of the ruling Communist Party, said the Defense Department's annual report to Congress on China's military capacity had exaggerated the extent and sophistication of China's military modernization.

"The report pays no attention to the actual state of affairs, and in a premeditated fashion exaggerates the so-called Chinese military threat," it said.

The Pentagon assessment, released Friday, suggested that new missiles, submarines and aircraft could give China the ability to project power far beyond its shores.

Defense Department officials said last week that they had intended to give the report a balanced tone so that it could form the basis of a dialogue with the Chinese about their military intentions.

But, as it has done before, the Pentagon dismissed China's official defense budget as an inaccurate view of its true spending. The report said China's coming deployment of mobile land- and sea-based ballistic missiles with the range to hit the United States had potentially given China "new options" in a conflict.

It also cited what it called the unexpectedly speedy development of a new Jin-class submarine equipped to carry missiles with a range of more than 5,000 miles. It also says China is preparing to deploy a land-based intercontinental ballistic missile, called the DF-31, with the range to hit parts of the United States.

Jin-class submarines and the DF-31 missile are part of China's nuclear forces, and the Pentagon raised the possibility that with enhanced abilities China may seek to change its policy of maintaining only a minimal nuclear deterrent.

Analysts have said Washington's efforts to develop a comprehensive nuclear missile defense system have prompted China to improve its nuclear missile forces.

China has said repeatedly that its policy of “no first use” of nuclear weapons remains unchanged.

The People’s Daily commentary did not address directly the specific assessments in the Pentagon report, but it said China’s military spending satisfied “objective self-defense requirements.”

Appendix 8

外交部发言人

中方对美国防部的中国军力报告表示强烈不满和坚决反对

《人民日报》(2007-05-29 第04版)

新华社北京5月28日电 外交部发言人姜瑜28日就美国国防部公布的2007年度《中国军事力量年度报告》答记者问时说,美国国防部这个报告别有用心地夸大中国军力和军费开支,继续散布“中国威胁论”,严重违反国际关系准则,粗暴干涉中国内政。中方对此表示强烈不满和坚决反对。

有记者问,近日,美国国防部公布了2007年度《中国军事力量年度报告》。中方对此有何评论?

姜瑜说,中国是热爱和平的国家,坚持走和平发展的道路,实行防御性国防政策。中国是促进亚太地区和世界和平的重要力量。国际社会对此自有公论。为维护国家安全和领土完整进行必要的国防建设是任何主权国家的职责。美方报告渲染所谓“中国威胁论”完全是错误和徒劳的。

她说,台湾是中国领土不可分割的一部分。中方坚决反对任何国家以任何形式干涉中国内政。中国政府坚持“和平统一、一国两制”的方针。我们愿以最大的诚意、尽最大的努力争取祖国和平统一的前景,但绝不容忍“台独”,绝不允许任何人以任何方式把台湾从中国分割出去。我们敦促美方恪守坚持一个中国政策、遵守中美三个联合公报、反对“台独”的承诺,停止售台武器和与台军事联系,不向“台独”分裂势力发出任何错误信号。

Appendix 9

Myanmar: No Stars as China Reviews New Capital

By REUTERS

Published: May 24, 2007

The Chinese Foreign Ministry published on its Web site an unflattering account of the remote new capital of its ally Myanmar, suggesting that Chinese diplomats might be resisting relocating there. The military government of Myanmar, formerly Burma, relocated its capital from leafy, colonial-era Yangon to Naypyidaw, 200 miles north, in 2005. The Chinese account described an airport whose only building is a VIP terminal, six small hotels, one public hospital and no cellphone reception. "They are also in the process of building four golf courses," the article dryly noted. It was interspersed with pictures of deserted new roads, lonely government buildings and an empty patch of land earmarked for the new embassy district. "To set up a thriving city in this patch of land will doubtless be a serious test for the government," it said. "Considering the relatively backward national development level of Myanmar, building such an enormous project will need a lot of time and hard work."